

Labour abandons pledge to reverse reforms in the NHS

By JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Labour party is to abandon its policy of abolishing the key health service reforms such as NHS trusts and GP fundholders and drop its pledge to restore underfunding in the NHS.

David Blunkett, the shadow health secretary, will tear up the document on which Labour fought the general election and put forward a new programme linking health with social and economic policies. A new policy review document on "the health and wealth of the nation", to be published in the new year, will adopt a more realistic attitude to funding and the health service reforms. It will also put greater emphasis on preventative health, on primary health rather than hospital care, and call for a new consultant grade for family doctors.

An incentive fund to reward high performing hospitals, one of the more radical suggestions in the present policy document, has been dropped.

Mr Blunkett, 45, a former local government spokesman, will use his speech at the party conference on Wednesday to spell out his new approach. Mr Blunkett argues that by 1996 or 1997 most NHS hospitals will be trusts and most GPs will be fundholders.

Although he rejected the commercial aspect of hospitals competing for patients, he accepted that the reforms would need to be adapted.

Smith keeps up pressure

LABOUR has decided to capitalise on the government's dilemma on the economy by bringing forward its party conference debate on economic affairs to next Monday (Jill Sherman writes).

Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor, will renew his attack on Norman Lamont and the prime minister in an attempt to keep up pressure on a government which is coming under fire from separate factions within its own party.

Divisions over Europe and the future of links with the trade unions are likely to dominate the conference. Although shadow cabinet

rather than abandoned. To unravel the reforms five years on would be a much harder task than one year on. Mr Blunkett said, giving his first interview since taking up his post. "Going back to the manifesto of 1992 will not be very helpful." He hinted that the paper drawn up by his predecessor, Robin Cook, dwelt too much on the past.

"We are not adopting a Tory philosophy or programme or going back to the position prior to 1990 or prior to 1979. We have got to go forward," he said. "I shall want to look at ways of reversing policies without some sort of grandiose abolition... If there are useful

aspects to be adopted, such as decentralisation in management decision making, we will take that on board. But we will not accept the commercialisation process or split which exists between fundholders and purchasers [district health authorities]."

He was particularly uneasy about GP fundholding — the scheme which allows GPs to buy hospital care — and the system is unlikely to remain in its present form. One of his first priorities would be to ensure that GP fundholders could not set up their own companies. One way that Mr Blunkett hopes to attract GPs away from fundholding is to create a new consultant grade for them. He argues that GPs need to have similar career incentives as those working in hospitals.

In the short term Labour will address the Tomlinson enquiry on London's health service — which is expected to recommend several closures — and insist that bridging loans are allocated to help build up primary care in the capital. Mr Blunkett indicated that Labour would not necessarily oppose closures.

On funding, Mr Blunkett made it clear that Labour was no longer tied to the general election commitment to restore underfunding within the NHS since 1979. The party was careful not to put a figure on the sum, although organisations such as the British Medical Association have estimated the accumulated shortfall at more than £6 billion.

During the election campaign, however, Neil Kinnock was only prepared to commit the party to spending £1 billion in the first 22 months. That commitment will remain until "we have worked out what new priorities will entail," Mr Blunkett said.

The 1992 pragmatism stands oddly with Mr Blunkett's left-wing leanings. He is personally against private medicine and would like to see private beds phased out of the NHS and private wings in NHS hospitals closed, but realises that he will have to square this first with the leadership.



Blunkett: spearheading a new pragmatism

members are now expected to toe the pro-European line agreed last Wednesday. Bryan Gould, who supports a referendum, will be speaking at several fringe meetings.

Fringe meetings on Maastricht, electoral reform and trade union links tomorrow are likely to set the hidden agenda.

The leadership has effectively ducked the problem of trade union links for this year by setting up a policy review group on the issue. However, conference is expected to ratify a decision to reduce the block vote at conference from 90 per cent to 70 per cent.



The cutting edge of poetry: Andra Fitzgerald-Brockholes holds a previously undiscovered sword and its ornate scabbard, belonging to Lord Byron, which are to be sold at auction at Bonhams, of Knightsbridge, London, next week

Debate uncovers the hidden rebels

By SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

TORY whips scrutinising the latest Commons motion urging John Major to keep Britain out of the exchange rate mechanism found little to cheer about yesterday.

For, added to the hard core of MPs prepared to vote

against the government, there has emerged a group of senior, sceptical backbenchers. The potential rebels who signed the motion are Sir Thomas Arnold, Michael Clark, James Pawsey, Sir Michael Neuber, Sir Patrick McNair-Wilson, Sir Nicholas

Bonsor, Sir Michael Neuber, Roger Knapman, Roger Moate, John Wilkinson, Vivian Bendall, David Shaw, Sir Ivan Lawrence, Sir Peter Tapsell, Paul Marland, Marion Roe and Sir Gerard Vaughan.

It is one thing to sign a motion, another to withstand the full weight of enraged whips. However, they are clearly signalling to John Major that he cannot rely on their support if he tries to take Britain back into the ERM.

Many of the new intake of MPs who were reprimanded by whips for signing the original "fresh start" Commons motion have defiantly signed up again, in spite of warnings that they are blighting their chances of making the ministerial ladder.

The group of committed Euro-sceptics has been known for some time and mirrors, almost exactly, the government's majority of 21 in the Commons. Those who carried their objections to voting against the Maastricht treaty ratification bill, most of whom signed the latest motion, were: Rupert Allason, John Biffen, Richard Body, Nicholas Budgen, John Butcher, John Carlisle, Michael Carttiss, Bill Cash, James Cran, Christopher Gill, Teresa Gorman, Harry Greenway, Andrew Hunter, Toby Jessel, Antony Marlow, David Porter, Richard Shepherd, Sir Trevor Skeet, Michael Spicer, Sir Teddy Taylor, Ann Winterton and Nicholas Winterton.

Most worrying for the whips are the hidden rebels: those sceptics, often ministers, who have so far kept quiet publicly. At least two members of the cabinet, Peter Lilley and Michael Portillo, would almost certainly fall into that camp if freed from the constraints of collective responsibility. Others such as Michael Howard and Gillian Shephard are far from enthusiastic.

Mr Hurd said: "I am looking at it but we would get into quite serious trouble if we started authorising the release of assets on which there are British claimants."

Dr Jack Cunningham, making his first Commons appearance as shadow foreign secretary, supported the use of British troops for assisting humanitarian aid but called for more effective imposition of sanctions against Serbia.

Mr Hurd said that there

Military strikes in Bosnia ruled out

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY AND ROBERT MORGAN

DOUGLAS Hurd, the foreign secretary, yesterday fought off MPs' calls for military intervention in the former Yugoslavia, insisting that action would increase the civilian death toll.

Speaking during an emergency Commons debate on foreign affairs, he defended the government's decision not to order land or air strikes to control fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina. "It would be easy to increase the casualty list without stopping the conflict," he said.

Mr Hurd also attacked the "grotesquely severe" sentences under which two Britons, Paul Ride and Michael Wainwright, are being held in Iraq for immigration offences.

Alice Mahon (Lab, Halifax), Mr Wainwright's MP, asked whether foreign reserves for the purchase of medicines could be released to the Iraqis as a basis for negotiations.

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Mr Hurd said that there

would be closer monitoring of the river Danube to prevent contravention of sanctions.

Winding up the five-hour debate, Mr Rikind made it clear that British troops to be deployed in Bosnia would be there to escort relief convoys and would not be setting up safe corridors. Many more troops would be required for such a task, he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

High Court to rule on coma man's fate

Health officials are to ask the High Court whether a Hillsborough stadium disaster victim who has been in a coma for three years can be allowed to die. Tony Bland, 22, was crushed and his brain was deprived of oxygen at the FA Cup semi-final tragedy in which 96 people died in 1989.

He has been in Airedale General Hospital, near Keighley, West Yorkshire, ever since with his parents, Allan, 56, and Barbara, 54, visiting him daily. Medical experts say that he will never recover and could survive in a vegetative state for 30 years. Doctors cannot legally end his life because he does not need a life support machine and is sustained by artificial feeding.

Mr Bland's parents want the feeding tube removed to allow him to die. Yorkshire Regional Health Authority said yesterday that proceedings were being launched in the Family Division of the High Court "to seek clarification of the law and the options available in this most difficult and sensitive case".

The central issues are whether artificial feeding amounts to medical treatment and whether it would be unlawful to withdraw it in the case of Mr Bland.

Car makers escape ban

The government is to allow car makers to sell off thousands of cars that cannot meet European legislation controlling toxic exhaust emissions (Kevin Eason writes). Manufacturers have said that because of the recession they could be left with 50,000 cars — worth about £450 million at showroom prices — which are not fitted with catalytic converters when the EC regulations come into force on January 1. The car makers have had almost two years to prepare assembly lines for the changeover and are producing cars with converters, which add about £500 to the price of an average model. Heavy price cuts have failed to attract enough buyers for the old models and large numbers are expected to be left. The EC has been asked to agree that 10 per cent of cars sold next year in the UK may be without catalysts.

Salmond defies critics

Alex Salmond, the Scottish National Party leader, was defiant yesterday at the party's annual conference in spite of dissatisfaction with his leadership. Fundamentalists want to move away from the party's recent left-wing stance to concentrate on attacking the unionist parties. They have criticised Mr Salmond's links with Scotland United, the home rule organisation formed by Labour MPs after the general election. Mr Salmond asserted his authority and replied to colleagues who had blamed the Scots for electoral defeat. "We don't blame the people, we try harder next time," he said. Many delegates doubted whether he would still be leader.

Nurse wins story prize

A psychiatric nurse has won the £12,000 first prize of the Ian St James Award, initiated by the best-selling thriller writer for unpublished authors of short stories. Jeremy Cain received the cheque for his story, "Black Sky At Night", in a ceremony at the London Hilton yesterday. Mr Cain, 34, taught English in the Sudan before becoming a nurse at Horsham, West Sussex. He said: "The novel I started writing six years ago might now get finished." The £3,500 second prize was won jointly by Francesca Clements, of London, and Peter Naylor, of Saffron Walden, Essex. The winning stories will be published as a paperback.

Policeman stabbed

A policeman stabbed in the chest while questioning two men claiming to be door-to-door salesmen in Edgware, north London, was last night in a serious condition at the Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel, where he was flown by a helicopter ambulance. PC Colin McManus, 31, who is married with no children, was stabbed twice in the chest when he and a colleague from Harrow police station were called in by a suspicious resident yesterday lunchtime. One man was arrested at the scene and another later. Two men are being questioned by police.

Army bullying claims

The army is investigating allegations that recruits have been bullied at the Prince of Wales's Division depot at Whittington Barracks, near Lichfield, Staffordshire. An officer and three non-commissioned officers at the training base have been moved to other duties while the enquiry is conducted. It follows an incident at the barracks last month in which an accommodation block used by recruits was damaged. Some young soldiers were arrested and an investigation was launched by the special investigations branch of the Royal Military Police.

New share issue

Portfolio, the Times stock market game, takes on a new dimension on Monday. It becomes Portfolio Plus and can be played seven days a week. Company performances on the stock market, shown in the share listings page in The Times, are the basis of the Monday to Saturday game when there will be £2,000 to be won each day. On Sundays scores depend on the top 100 companies listed in The Sunday Times Business section and the prize is £5,000. The new game means fresh cards are being distributed, each with a unique set of numbers. One card can be used for play in either or both newspapers. For those checking the lists in both papers there can be a £1,000 bonus.



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Photo by G. Williams/SELECT

Ministers consider curbs on spending

By PETER RIDDELL, POLITICAL EDITOR

SENIOR ministers yesterday for the first time considered a series of options for holding down public spending, including a tight squeeze on public sector pay and cuts in a range of capital projects.

The cabinet's special committee on public spending, known as EDX, met yesterday under the chairmanship of Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, and was given a series of illustrative options of how to achieve the already agreed upper limit of £244.5 billion for next year.

Michael Portillo, the chief secretary, presented a paper setting out what the Treasury sees as unavoidable obligations on, for instance, increased spending on social security benefits caused by the recession, together with a variety of offsetting savings in

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Resignation speech mixes self-mockery with a serious message on chequebook journalism

The BBC greets Brooke with relief

By SIMON TAIT AND
MELINDA WITSTOCK

THE arts world, left vulnerable by the fall of its champion in the Treasury and the cabinet, felt only slightly more secure last night with the announcement of his successor. "We were enjoying Mellor's chutzpah and passion, but we don't know what Mr Brooke's views are," one senior administrator said.

David Mellor left important unfinished arts business, not least of which is the autumn spending round. In the six months since he began to build the national heritage department, he laid foundations for the national lottery, devolution of arts funding to the regions and the Arts Council's national arts and media strategy. Many in the arts fear that these will now be vulnerable to Treasury cuts. Mr Brooke will also have to take a position on the future of the Royal Opera House.

Simon Mundy, director of the National Campaign for the Arts, said: "Whilst Peter Brooke is a perfectly cultured man, when you are putting together a new department you need someone of great dynamism and vision, and that has to be proved. Whether he will have the strength to fend off the Treasury on both the arts grant and the national lottery is unclear."

Next week Mr Mellor was due to receive the final draft of the strategy document *A Creative Future*, but this week the regional boards, led by the London Arts Board, told the Arts Council that the document offered them no help in managing the delegation of Arts Council funding or in creating their own regional strategies.

The appointment has come as a pleasant surprise to the BBC, which saw Mr Mellor's departure as a body blow. It said last night that it was looking forward to "early discussions" on issues arising from a green paper on the corporation, as well as the timetable of legislation on the renewal of its royal charter.

The green paper had been due to be approved at a cabinet meeting early next week. Yesterday a ministry source said it would be unlikely if the new secretary did not wish to put his stamp on it.

Richard Dunn, chief executive of Thames Television, said: "The jury is still out, but Mr Brooke is an extremely affable and approachable man who is likely to start from the position that the BBC is an important institution worth preserving."

The sports world reacted with surprise but with some pleasure to the appointment.

Peter Lawson, secretary of the Central Council of Physical Recreation, which represents the national governing bodies, said it was an inspired choice. Mr Brooke had the "wisdom and gravitas" to look again at the much-criticised *Review of Sport*, published last December by Robert Atkins, the former sport minister.



Portfolio postscript: David Mellor and his wife, Judith, leaving their Putney home yesterday morning before his resignation statement in the Commons

A charming sort of chap called in to save the day

PETER Brooke is best known to the public for an entirely uncharacteristic gaffe, when, last January, he sang *Clementine* on an Irish television chat show shortly after seven building workers had been murdered by the IRA. Mr Brooke's offer to resign was rejected by John Major, and he later won the sympathetic support of the Commons.

The incident is revealing about Mr Brooke. It shows both his good natured affability, which led him to agree to sing, and his popularity at Westminster. Otherwise, he has shown himself to be the classic safe and secure politician. His appointment will no doubt be criticised as unadventurous, less than six months after he left the cabinet. However, within the Tory party and at Westminster, it will be welcomed and seen as a typically cautious move by Mr Major.

Peter Brooke, 58, is the epitome of the old-style English ruling class: affable, diffident, decent and intelligent. He has the amiable and dryly witty, almost pedantic, style of educated Englishmen of his background (Marlborough, Balliol, the MCC and traditional Anglicanism).

Mr Brooke has been MP for the City of London and Westminster since 1977; spotted during the 1987 election opposite Parliament in the heart of his constituency, but without roseate, he explained that he had calculated that he had a 1-in-400 chance of meeting a constituent there at mid-morning in early June.

His only public passion is, like the prime minister, for cricket and he has detailed knowledge of *Wisden*. With a senior civil servant, he once set a cricket quiz in *The Spectator* that some of his colleagues tried, and largely failed, to answer at a cabinet meeting.

For Mr Major, Mr Brooke represents a solid, and loyal, addition to the cabinet at a time of pressure. His background is pro-European, from his days as, briefly, a journalist; as an early successful management consultant, when he lived in Brussels in the early seventies; and as a Treasury

Peter Brooke's
bluff image
masks a
shrewd mind,
Peter Riddell
writes

what resembles in bluntness, he is much more astute than he seems. In Northern Ireland, he was respected by all sides for even-handedness.

Mr Brooke is little known in the arts world. His cultural interests are mainstream, rather than avant-garde, nearer Gilbert and Sullivan than Stockhausen. He collects pictures and is interested in conservation.

As heritage secretary, he will face delicate negotiations — with the BBC over a consultative paper on its future, with the press over the Calcutta report on regulation, and with pools promoters and charities over a national lottery. All the time, he will be seen by the arts and sports worlds as being as much their ambassador to the Treasury as a representative of the government.

They will find Peter Brooke courteous, charming and understanding, and people will leave meetings with him feeling they have made their point, but unsure as to where he stands. His instincts are those of a true conservative, to preserve institutions that work rather than to change them for the sake of it. The BBC should feel reassured.



Musical mistake: Peter Brooke sings on television

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Hubris — or hounding?

The world that David Mellor awoke to on Friday was a raw, gloomy and unfamiliar one. This was to be the first day in a new life, without, for the first time in 11 years, the trappings that had

become desperately important to him. The irritating inconveniences that loomed began immediately: Mellor cannot drive and nor can his wife Judith. How would he travel to deliver a speech of defiance to a packed House of Commons . . . ?

Ivan Fallon on the rise and fall of David Mellor — in *The Sunday Times* tomorrow



Mellor takes parting shot at morality of the tabloids

DAVID Mellor questioned the role of the tabloid press in his downfall yesterday and insisted that he had not breached ministerial rules.

After resigning as national heritage secretary, Mr Mellor told MPs in a dignified and, at times, self-mocking statement that he accepted he had become an embarrassment to the government and was the author of his own misfortunes. His statement was greeted with sympathy by MPs, with some predicting that, at only 43, he could return to government one day.

Mr Mellor said that he had always been relaxed about the media and had never believed that statutory intervention was the answer. However, he believed that others needed to examine whether the tabloid press exercised its power with responsibility.

Watched from the gallery by his wife, Judith, and his son Frederick, Mr Mellor said: "After what my family and I have been through for these last two months, it is almost with a sense of relief that I come to make this statement. There were times during that period when one wondered whether one was living in Ceausescu's Romania rather than John Major's Britain — bugged telephone calls and other things came out."

On having spent months being pursued by journalists,

David Mellor told the Commons of his relief at leaving office yesterday and reiterated his innocence of any impropriety. Sheila Gunn reports

he said: "I have to say that when chequebooks are waved for stories, however lurid; when people are offered at the beginning of the conversation, 'We'd like to talk to you, we'll make it worth your while'; when bugged telephone calls — we now have to accept it's not just me — can appear, I do think there will be some who will want to reflect on these matters."

The only justification for their activities was that a greater public good was being served, he added.

"But can anyone sufficiently explain the paradox that, in serving a greater public good, one is entitled to bug and buy and abuse and use methods that are themselves amoral or at best morally neutral? I think that is an issue that at some point the House will have to come to consider."

Mr Mellor said that it was not actually a sad moment for him and he had resigned for the best of reasons. "I could not expect my colleagues either in the government or in Parliament to put up with more and more ceaseless flow

of stories about me in the tabloid press. And having grown heavily sick of my private life myself, I could hardly expect others to take a more charitable view."

Mr Major refused to accept his resignation in July after newspaper revelations about his affair with Antonia de Sancha, giving him the opportunity to continue working on the green paper on the BBC and preparing the bill for a national lottery.

Since July, he had regarded himself as, in effect, the servant of the government and the Conservative party and, if a time came when his presence was an embarrassment, he could not continue work for which he felt genuine passion.

"The time to go was yesterday," he said.

Other stories followed about business and social connections, culminating in the libel action about a newspaper story of the Mellor family's holiday in Spain paid for by Mona Bauwens, daughter of a Palestine Liberation Organisation official. The allegations, together with further revelations about a second expenses

paid trip, raised the question of whether Mr Mellor had breached ministerial rules on accepting hospitality.

Mr Mellor told MPs: "I am very glad to leave office with that having been made clear that there has been no breach whatsoever of any ministerial rules."

Mr Mellor went on: "I have to accept that in the jobs that we all do you have to take a view, and I don't resent the fact that some others say they would have taken a different view, just as there are others, I suspect, in the situation in which I found myself, who would have done what I did."

"But what is absolutely clear is that there was no question of any impropriety and I hope that I can leave office with that fact very clearly established." After 11 years in government, his great sadness was that having established the national heritage department he could not continue work for which he felt genuine passion.

Before slinking, he added: "As I leave the warmth of government for the icy wastes of the backbenches, I do want everyone to know that there is a precedent for this because Captain Oates was born and raised in my constituency."

Surprise choice, page 1
Simon Jenkins, page 16
Leading article and letters, page 17

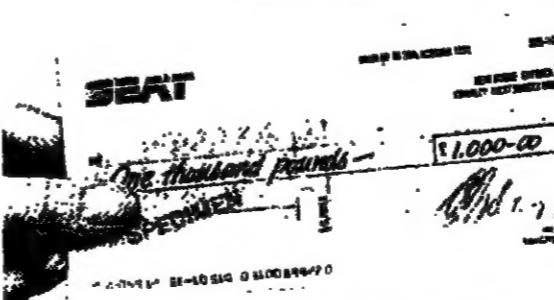
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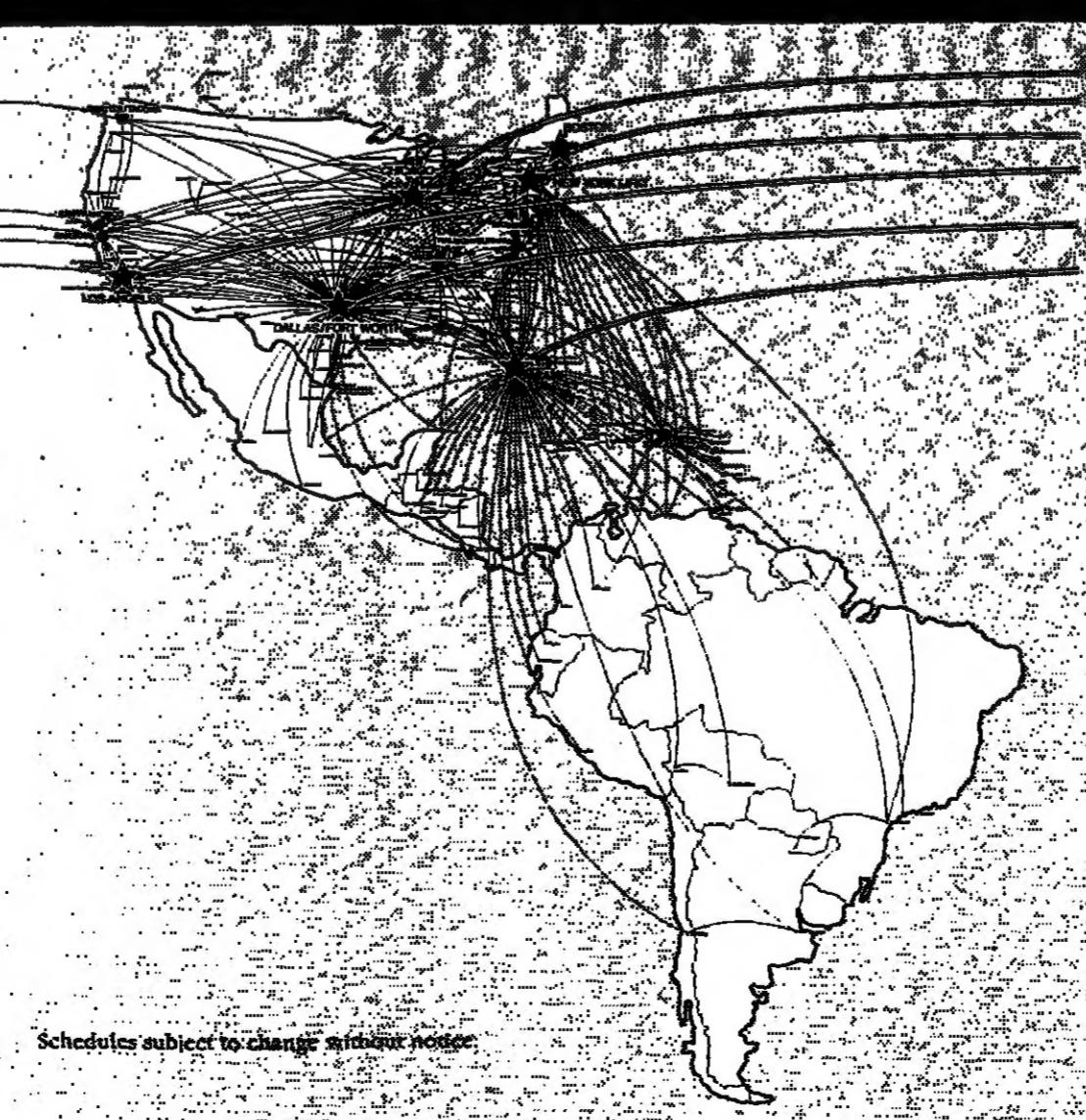
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Campaigners claim victory after retrial accepts plea of diminished responsibility

Court frees woman who burnt brutal husband to death

By LIN JENKINS

A WOMAN jailed for life for murdering her husband by setting fire to him after enduring ten years of brutality, walked free from the Old Bailey yesterday after a retrial.

Robert Harman, QC, for the prosecution, said that the Crown now accepted Kiranjit Ahluwalia's plea of guilty to manslaughter on grounds of diminished responsibility, a defence not put forward at the original trial. Mr Justice Hobhouse sentenced her to three years and four months' prison, which she has already served. "I consider justice does not require you to be detained in prison any longer," he said.

The retrial had been ordered by the Court of Appeal on the strength of fresh evidence on Ahluwalia's mental health at the time of the death. The judge said that her new plea was accepted on those grounds, not on those of provocation.

Supporters outside the court, waiting with balloons and cheers and kisses for Ahluwalia, maintained that



Deepak Ahluwalia: systematically beat wife

Wives boil over too slowly for law

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

KIRANJIT Ahluwalia's case highlighted once more the position of battered wives who kill their husbands, not in the fury of a violent quarrel but in the aftermath of a row.

The delay between the husband's action and the killing has proved crucial to any woman offering provocation as a defence when charged with the murder of a violent or alcoholic man who has mistreated her for years.

Women's aid groups and lawyers have argued that wives who have long suffered violent treatment may react with a "slow burn" rather than the sudden loss of self-control that belongs to the classic definition of provocation. The delay, they say, can lead to a boiling over rather than a cooling off and does not necessarily indicate the deliberate plotting of retribution. They seek a redefinition of provocation so that juries can take into account the history of a marriage.

The Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor of Gosforth, pointed to the difficulty facing the judiciary in such cases during Ahluwalia's appeal two months ago, when he warned of the dangers in allowing the concept of provocation to be extended.

Ahluwalia's case also showed the dilemma caused by the government's insistence that the penalty for murder must be an automatic life sentence and also raised a question about whether the right defence was run at her first trial, when medical evidence existed that she had been severely depressed.

At the time, the case of Sara Thornton, jailed for life for

the verdict marked a victory for women who used the defence of provocation when they killed a violent husband.

Ahluwalia, who had been in tears in the witness box, beamed broadly and asked her campaigners not to forget the plight of other women victims of domestic violence in prison for murder. "I'm so happy," she said. "I express my thanks to Geoffrey [her barrister], my solicitor and all those who have sent flowers. I am looking forward to seeing my children."

One friend sported a painted face bearing the words "Self-defence is no offence."

Others carried banners proclaiming: "Domestic violence is the crime." Many were members of the Southall Black Sisters, who took up the case, and were praised in court for their work in discovering the circumstances of the crime.

The court was told that Ahluwalia, convicted in December 1989 at Lewes Crown Court, had been subjected to systematic violence throughout her marriage to Deepak Ahluwalia. A court had twice granted orders restraining him from hitting her and he had sought treatment for psychotic behaviour.

He would beat her, strike her with screwdrivers or a telephone and beat her if she spoke without permission. The accumulated violence induced severe depression. She lost weight, became nervous and cried often.

She once began divorce proceedings but the marriage deteriorated further until her husband threatened to leave her for his girl friend. On the

evening of his death he refused to discuss the matter and threatened to burn her face with an iron if she did not find the money for a telephone bill.

Mr Robertson said that a letter from Ahluwalia to her husband when he spent three days with his lover showed how she had reached the "nadir of self-abasement".

"It was a classic example of a woman who suffered domestic violence and degradation, lost her self-esteem and was prepared to do almost anything." In the letter she promised not to go out, have friends, drink coffee or even laugh if he would consent to stay.

It was against that background that she acted irrationally on the night, overcome by the strain of living with a violent man who was planning to leave her, he said.

Mr Harman said that Ahluwalia, then 33, a mother of two, set fire to her husband at their home in Crawley, West Sussex, on May 8, 1989. She had thrown a bucket of petrol

over him, lit a stick and thrown it into his room. Mr Ahluwalia was seen running screaming and in his pyjama bottoms, to a neighbouring house, where he collapsed on the lawn. He suffered 40 per cent burns and died five days later in hospital.

Ahluwalia always insisted that she intended only to hurt him, not to kill him. In a letter she wrote from prison to her mother-in-law, she explained: "Deepak done so many sins, so I give him a fire bath to wash his sins. I done prison pilgrimage to wash my sins."

Five psychiatrists agreed that she had been suffering severe depression at the time.

Mr Justice Hobhouse said that his job was to decide how diminished her responsibility was for the crime, in the light of medical evidence not available at the original trial. He said he believed that a sentence of four years would have been passed on that occasion, making it likely that she would by now have been released.



Legal face-off: supporters demonstrating outside the Old Bailey yesterday

Secret bid stumps collectors

By BILL FROST

WITH a reverence bordering on idolatry, worshippers gathered at Christie's auction rooms in London yesterday to caress and covet cricket's most holy relics and icons.

To the uninitiated the late John Arlott's definitive collection of the *Wisden Cricketers' Almanack* might appear like so many rather dog-eared books. But to those willing to travel any distance and pay almost any price the almanack is a holy text, made doubly valuable by the writer and broadcaster's slightly cramped signature on the title page.

A breathless hush fell over the auction house in South Kensington as Lot 13 was called — the first, second and third editions of *Wisden* bound together in fading green cloth.

As the lot went to an anonymous bidder for £6,800, an elderly man with an MCC tie and military moustache remarked angrily that dealers were at work for Mick Jagger and Ian Botham. "I have it on the highest authority that pop stars and others are after the *Wisdens*. It really isn't on."

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BETTER OFF
TALKING TO
BARCLAYS

Author dreams up du Maurier sequel

By TOM RHODES

LAST NIGHT Susan Hill dreamt she went to Manderley again. Tonight she will have a similar dream.

For the next year, the playwright and author will think of little else as she carefully crafts what must be considered her most delicate work of fiction — a sequel to *Rebecca*, regarded by many as Daphne du Maurier's best novel.

For what is described as a sum "approaching £1 million", Ms Hill must recreate the haunting imagery of the Cornish coast and try to answer myriad unanswered questions that have plagued readers since

Rebecca was written in 1938. Does Mrs Danvers survive? Is Manderley burnt to the ground? Does the ghost of *Rebecca* continue to cast a shadow over the de Wintars' otherwise tender marriage?

Ms Hill says she cannot underestimate the influence that the late author, who died in 1989, had on her own work. She never imagined that the du Maurier estate would approach her and ask if she would create a sequel — a book which, in spite of persistent pressure throughout her lifetime, du Maurier always refused to write.

This summer saw a rather special event in the motoring calendar. The launch of a car that was genuinely different from the rest. It's called the Xedos 6.

The design brief was simple. Start with a clean sheet and end with the ultimate luxury sports saloon. Along the way break a good few rules.

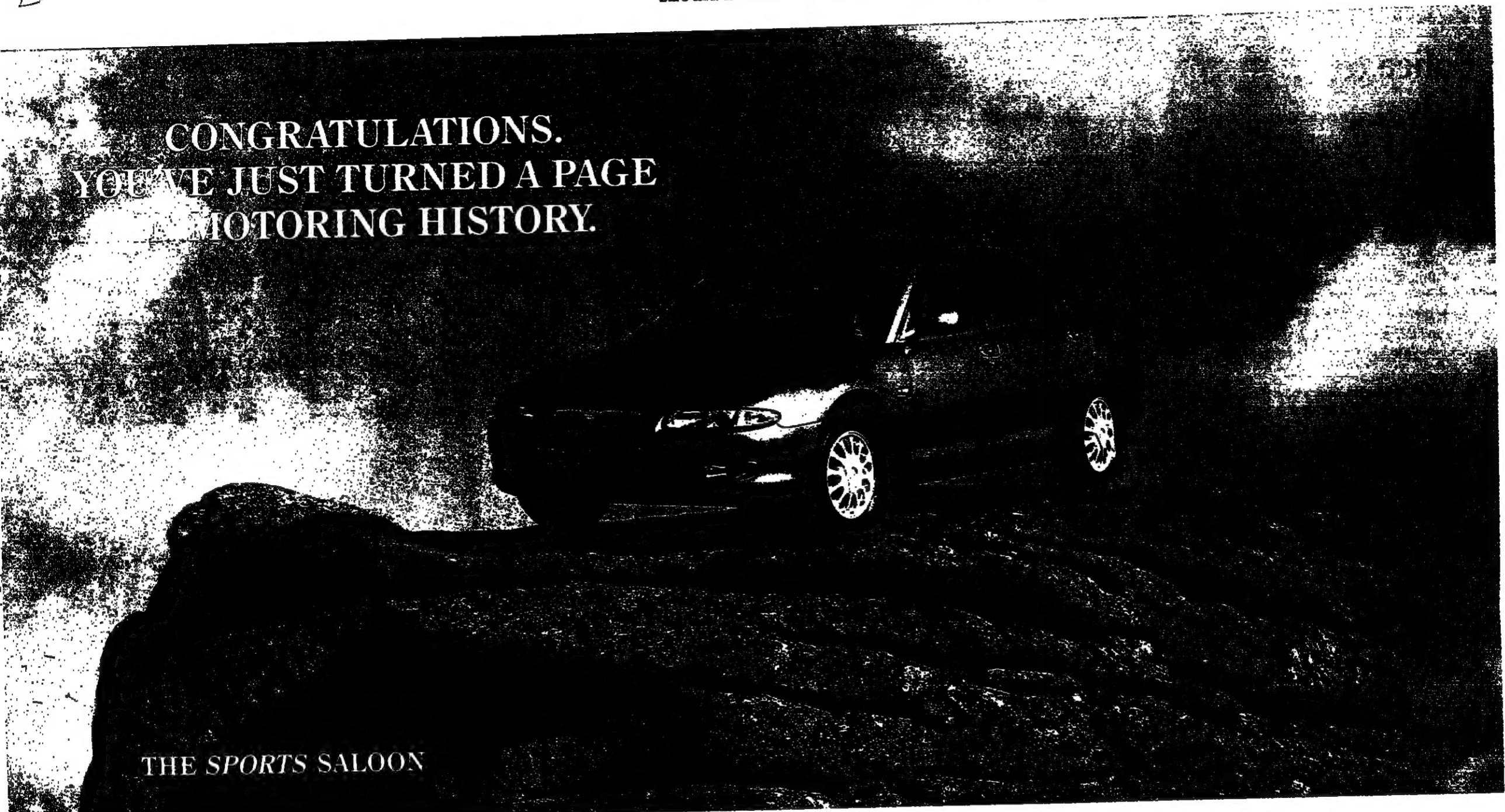
The first rule to go was the one which said such cars should look staid and rather boxlike. Hence the ultra low front, the subtle curves, the flush fitting glass and the dazzling mirror-finish paintwork. The sort of dashing lines, in fact, normally reserved for those more glamorous motoring cousins, the two-door-coupés.

Gone, too, are the rather spartan interiors favoured by the Germans. Sit in a Xedos SE and you sink into soft leather, cocooned in a sculpted cockpit that curves gently round you.

As you'd expect, every power-operated labour saving device you could wish for is at your fingertips. And you'll also have the security of a driver's airbag to protect you should a front-on collision ever happen. (Naturally ABS is standard along with a catalytic

CONGRATULATIONS.
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IN MOTORING HISTORY.

THE SPORTS SALOON



converter.) The driving force behind this particular piece of history is a 2.0i 24 valve V6 engine allied to computer designed suspension. Take her for a drive and yet more rules fall by the wayside. One moment you're gliding effortlessly across the miles in stately comfort. The next you throw her into a bend and suddenly you have the rock steady poise of a true sports car.

More mould-breaking innovation is in evidence on the automatic version. It virtually reads your mind. It's done using computer sensors which analyse your driving style and select economy or sports mode depending on your mood.

And then to make sure gear changes are imperceptibly smooth, the same computer enters into conversation with the one controlling the engine to cut torque at the moment of change.

By now you may be itching to test these remarkable claims with a test drive.

In which case, where do you find the new Xedos? Well, would it be breaking all the rules to suggest a Mazda showroom? It might have a few years ago. But one look at all the other desirable technology on the forecourt, the MX-3, MX-6 and RX-7 and you'll have to agree, it's no surprise at all.

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QUEEN
ELIZABETH II

Schools risk closure for hiring staff on blacklist

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

INDEPENDENT schools will be closed if they employ staff on a government blacklist of sex and drugs offenders. John Patten, education secretary, said yesterday. A bill to be published before the end of the year will include sanctions to speed up the process of dealing with private schools that breach guidelines introduced last year. The initiative is the latest in a series of measures to guard against child abuse in residential schools.

The education department's consultation proposals would allow Mr Patten to close schools found to be employing banned teachers, without going through lengthy pro-

Police to salvage trawler

By TONY DAWE

THE final stages of a police operation to salvage a sunken trawler began yesterday off the coast of Cornwall. It is the first time that British police have attempted such an exercise as part of a criminal investigation.

Devon and Cornwall detectives are investigating the seaworthiness of the *Pescado*, which set out on a fishing trip in February last year without a safety certificate. They are also looking at claims that the trawler was hit by a submarine or another vessel before sinking 15 miles southeast of Falmouth with the loss of all six aboard. The young and inexperienced crew had been hired for a two-week scalloping trip by *Pescado*'s owner, Guideday of Plymouth.

The raising of the boat was ordered by David Bruce, coroner for southeast Cornwall. It also follows a campaign by relatives who feared that the tragedy was being overlooked. The boat will be raised in two stages over the weekend, weather and tides permitting.

Super-union likely

By PATRICIA TEHAN

A NEW super-union with two million members, created by the merger of the TGWU and GMB general unions, appears increasingly likely after the TGWU agreed yesterday to hold talks aimed at "building a closer relationship".

Bill Morris, TGWU general secretary, said that the union's general executive council had approved proposals for closer co-operation. "It goes without saying that our relationship with the GMB, Britain's other big general union, must be one of the most important for us. Throughout the British

economy, we negotiate together." He said that the move would benefit union members and industrial relations.

John Edmonds, his counterpart at GMB, said recently that he did not expect the two unions to last separately beyond the end of the decade.

Mr Morris said he hoped a merger would happen sooner.

The AEU engineering union and the EETPU electricians' union merged earlier this year. The three big public service unions Nupse, Nafo and Cohse are also considering a merger.



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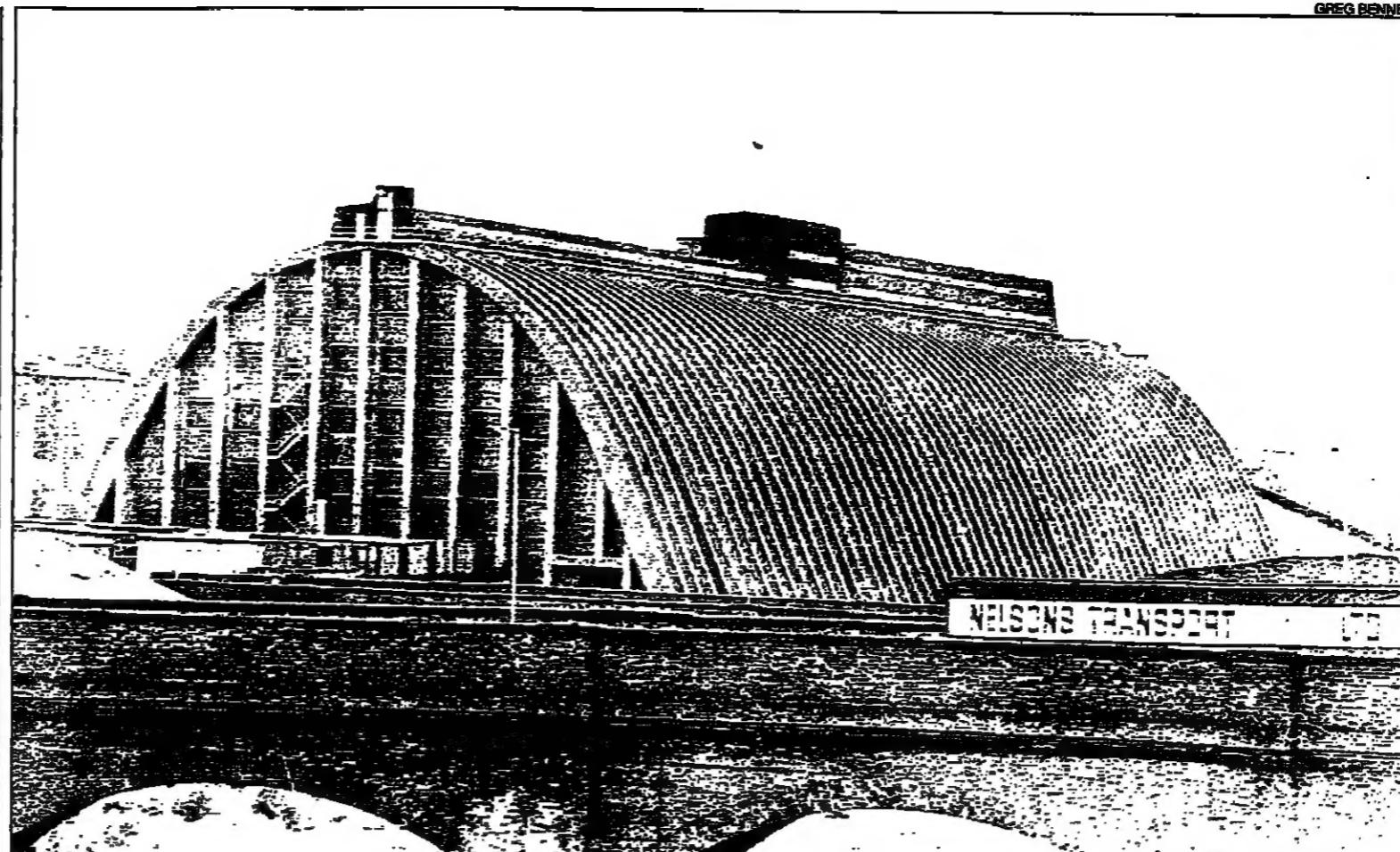
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Sweet salvation: a concrete silo dominating the Mersey waterfront at Bootle, where Tate and Lyle once stored 100,000 tons of sugar, has been saved from demolition and awarded

grade two star-listed status (Ronald Farrow writes). After three years of uncertainty, Robert Key, heritage under secretary, has announced protection for the silo, which had

been earmarked for demolition by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. Diane Kay, inspector at the modern building listing office of English Heritage, said: "The silo is one of only

two buildings of its kind. It is heroic in its simplicity and very impressive in its scale." The silo, built in the 1950s, fell into disuse with the advent of home grown beet sugar.

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Victoria tower planned

By MARCUS BINNEY,
ARCHITECTURE
CORRESPONDENT

PLANS for a new 20-storey office block overlooking the grounds of Buckingham Palace were unveiled in London yesterday by the architect of the much-praised tent-roofed stand at Lord's cricket ground.

The proposed tower would be part of a major reorganisation of the forecourt at Victoria rail station and would finance a new bus station, pedestrian plaza and an improved underground ticket concourse for the Victoria and Circle lines.

The tower would be Michael Hopkins's first venture into high-rise architecture. He said: "I believe there is an opportunity for a dramatic new building closing the end of Victoria Street, which is already lined with relatively tall buildings. It will not significantly intrude into any of the Royal parks."

An exhibition of the proposal is open at 9-10 Terminus Place, opposite Victoria rail station, from Monday to Friday, 7.30am to 6.30pm, until October 23.

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Study bolsters link between bottle feeds and lower IQ

BY NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

EVIDENCE that babies who are bottle fed may grow into less intelligent adults has been found by a team of British scientists.

They have located lower levels of a substance linked with healthy neurological formation in the brains of formula-fed infants. The findings, by a team at The Royal Hospital for Sick Children, in Glasgow, provides direct evidence that breast-fed infants might have a better chance of realising their full intellectual potential than those fed cow's milk or formula alone.

The research, to be published soon, examined the brain tissues of 20 cot death babies who had died within 40 weeks. Some had been breast-fed and some had been fed on formula.

Levels of docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), a fatty substance, were found to differ significantly. Breast-fed infants had higher neurological concentrations than bottle-fed ones. Humans make small amounts of DHA from alpha-linolenic acid, a substance found in green-leaf vegetables, but these are unlikely to be enough for an infant's rapidly developing brain, the scientists suggest.

Instead most DHA comes from a diet including seafood passing to the developing infant via the milk and, when in the womb, taken from the

bloodstream by the placenta. Significant amounts are also found in guinea pigs, frogs' legs and rodents which, in some cultures, are important foods.

The findings form part of a growing body of evidence, much of it emerging this year, which is linking dietary levels of DHA in mothers with infant brain development and healthy births. American scientists reported at a meeting in Oslo last week that premature babies fed formula and DHA developed better eyesight than those fed formula alone. Norwegian scientists disclosed a direct link between intelligence levels in infants aged one-and-a-half and the levels of DHA in their blood. These discoveries reflect findings published in January by

Medical Research Council scientists in Cambridge showing that premature babies fed mother's milk had, by the age of seven or eight, significantly higher IQs than those who were bottle-fed.

The findings do not surprise Michael Crawford, director of the Institute of Brain Chemistry and Human Nutrition at Hackney Hospital, London.

During the past three years his institute has carried out research with mothers and babies in London's East End

that also links low levels of DHA in new-born babies to the increased chances of a premature birth.

They confirm comparisons made by Norwegian scientists between female islanders from the Faeroes, who are big eaters of seafood, and women in Denmark. "The Faeroe islanders have half the number of premature births," said professor Crawford.

Low blood levels of arachidonic acid, another key substance also prevalent in seafood, have been linked by the institute's scientists with a lower than average birth weight.

Low levels of arachidonic acid and DHA together can lead to a smaller head circumference.

The evidence has prompted Professor Crawford to attempt to raise £1 million for a new nutrition advisory centre in the East End.

Crawford: not surprised by research findings

A RUSSIAN couple who sailed from St Petersburg to Southampton in a 24-foot yacht delayed an order to send them back to sea yesterday by applying for political asylum.

Alexander and Galina Grazhdankin, from Moscow, had

been given until noon yesterday to leave the haven of Weymouth, where they arrived on Tuesday en route to the West Indies and Australia. Now they can stay at least until their application is processed. Mrs Grazhdankin, 45, said: "I'm terrified at the thought of going to sea again. I'm sure we will die. The news we have now is fantastic."

The couple embarked nine weeks ago on their 2,000-mile journey in search of a better life in a boat that has no working engine and lets in two gallons of water an hour. It has no distress flares or life-saving equipment. They had only a packet of spaghetti, tea and some sugar.

Mr Grazhdankin, 46, is an oceanic navigator, but neither he nor his wife

have any sailing experience. The boat has no cooker and has only candles for light. He said: "We have been treated with such kindness by everybody. They have given us so much help. Our hope for now is that we can stay in your country."

If the couple are not allowed to stay in Britain, their next stop will be the Canary Islands.

Russian boat people apply to stay in Britain

BY JULIA LLEWELLYN SMITH

A RUSSIAN couple who sailed from St Petersburg to Southampton in a 24-foot yacht delayed an order to send them back to sea yesterday by applying for political asylum.

Alexander and Galina Grazhdankin, from Moscow, had

Woman takes the helm of barristers' reform debate

The chairman of this weekend's Bar conference speaks to Frances Gibb

AS BARRISTERS meet for their annual conference in London today one of the clearest signs of change at the Bar is that the chairman of this year's event is a woman.

Anne Rafferty, QC, is one of the few women to reach the top of a profession in which 95 per cent of QCs are men. She chairs the 1992 conference under the appropriate theme of "reform".

A member of the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice, Miss Rafferty is well placed to comment. The overriding issue for the legal system as a whole, she says, is "to restore public confidence" after recent miscarriages of justice. This subject will be one of the topics debated at the conference.

Nor is the Bar exempt. It has undergone radical change since the government's legal reforms were published in 1989.

Miss Rafferty, however, believes that it has some way to go. "The aim is to advance appropriately, without losing those aspects of our tradition of standards which we need to hold on to," she said.

She added that the Bar remained vulnerable to a public perception that "we do an enervating two hours in court, have our briefs carried back by our clerks to chambers prior to a quick sherry before nipping home to dinner."

The theme of reform dominates several workshops this weekend. There is the future of

future of the circuits; serious fraud; and women and the law.

Ask Miss Rafferty, aged 42 and a mother of three, how much harder it is for women to succeed at the Bar and she will talk for hours. She and her husband, Brian Barker, QC, both took silk in 1990 but her career involved constant juggling of home and work.

"The carol concert, the visit to the specialist... the mother has to deal with the children, get up in the night, get up early in the morning, hand over the children to someone caring, do a day's work, come home and make supper, look at work for the next day, get up in the night again, and so on."

She was also refused briefs because she was a woman. But Miss Rafferty is no champion of women's rights and will not play the "woman's card" - urging special arrangements for women.

"The Bar is doing better now," she said. "Women do not have to pay full rent on maternity leave, and other changes will come. Having people such as Barbara Mills [the director of public prosecutions, who is speaking at the conference] and Dame Ann Ebsworth [a High Court judge] provide a great example."

Another such example would be for the Bar to elect its first woman leader. On that Miss Rafferty will not be drawn. But she is clearly one of the hottest tips.

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Fantastic voyage: Alexander and Galina Grazhdankin in the leaky boat they sailed from St Petersburg in search of a better life

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De Klerk and Mandela to meet today

Pretoria frees ANC men to restart talks

FROM MICHAEL HAMLYN IN JOHANNESBURG

A TERSE three-line statement yesterday ended 18 days of negotiations and confirmed that President de Klerk of South Africa and Nelson Mandela, the African National Congress president, are to restart talks this morning.

About 120 political prisoners were released last night from jails all over the country as a result of a deal between the government and the ANC, which cleared the way for the meeting, at the World Trade Centre outside Johannesburg.

The releases were the climax of arduous negotiations at which Cyril Ramaphosa, the ANC secretary-general, and Roelf Meyer, the constitutional development minister, tried to stare each other down over three preconditions for the meeting set by the ANC. They were that the government should make secure the migrant hostels in the townships, ban the carrying of dangerous weapons and release the people the ANC say are political prisoners.

In the end, negotiations reportedly came down primarily to the issue of political prisoners. The government insisted that the release of people in jail for murder, even if for political motives, must be linked to some general amnesty that would also exonerate members of the security forces accused of apartheid crimes.

The release of prisoners yesterday indicates that it was the government that blinked first. An ANC official in the Western Cape said last night that the government earlier had reneged on its commitment to release prisoners and had tried to use them as pawns to force the ANC to agree to a general amnesty.

Yesterday, Mr de Klerk tried to soften the blow to his supporters. He insisted that the decision to release the prisoners had been taken firstly for the sake of reconciliation. "We must close the book on the past," he said, "not selectively but fully." He added: "I hope when this is done it

will be understood as a deed of reconciliation in order to unlock the future."

It was surmised yesterday that Robert McBride, who set off a bomb in a restaurant in Durban in 1986, killing three people, and two other ANC bombers, would be released more or less immediately.

The idea of today's top-level

meeting is that it should discuss ways of tackling the violence that is ravaging the black townships in many parts of the country.

The need to tackle the violence is given additional urgency this weekend because tomorrow the government of KwaZulu, the Zulu homeland, is celebrating Shaka Day, commemorating the founder of the Zulu nation, in an area on the outskirts of Durban that is dominated by the ANC.

● London delight: Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, told the Commons yesterday that he had spoken to both sides and was delighted that differences had been resolved.



Pearls of the Orient: Wei-wei, second left, after being crowned Miss Republic of China yesterday in a beauty contest in Taipei, Taiwan. Juan Li-ju, left, and Chen Ching-wen were second and third runners-up

Angola to vote amid fears of new war

Next week's poll is on track, but some fear the losers may react violently, writes Sam Kiley

Angola will vote next week in its first democratic elections amid fears that the just-ended 16-year civil war could resume immediately after the results become known. But there is optimism, too, because of the apparent commitment of the parties to the democratic process.

Many political parties have sprung up since the war, but the election will be a close race between the former Marxist government of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), led by President dos Santos, and the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Unita), led by Jonas Savimbi. The prospect that the losers will dispute the outcome lies behind the fears of a return to civil war.

A senior United Nations official in Luanda said: "What is absolutely critical is that both sides believe they will win. That has meant so far that they have been very committed to the peace process and to helping with the registration of voters and the organisation of elections. So long as they continue to believe they will win, everything is on track."

Angola was devastated by the war. But, with the help of the UN and other bodies, the national electoral commission (run jointly by the two main parties) has registered 4.86 million voters in a population of about ten million.

Nevertheless there has been a steady increase in tension as election day approaches. Last week, Unita soldiers held 11 members of the presidential guard, burnt their three vehicles and closed the airport at Kuito in Bié province because the guards arrived in the town an hour before Dr Savimbi was to address a rally.

Elias Suipeto Pena, Unita's representative on the joint verification committee which monitors the ceasefire, said: "We believed that they wanted to assassinate Savimbi. But we have straightened this out and apologised."

Officially, the armed forces of both sides are supposed to have been demobilised by tomorrow, but only about 65 per cent of the MPLA and 26 per cent of Unita's soldiers have returned to civilian life. And diplomatic sources have confirmed that both sides are illegally keeping secret armies out of sight of UN observers.

In the words of one Western diplomat, "there is no doubt that both the MPLA and Unita have kept substantial forces in reserve and that these are quite likely to be used when the election result goes against one side or the other ... It might come to all-out war, but more likely ... is a drift into chaotic armed conflict."

● Workers killed: Three Frenchmen working on oil installations in northern Angola were killed when Angolan troops went on the rampage. General Cirilo de Sa, a senior military official, said in Luanda yesterday. He said details were sketchy, but initial reports suggested that demobilised government soldiers had rioted, attacking oil installations in the town of Soyo at the mouth of the Congo river. "It appears to have been a problem of public order and not politically motivated," he added. (Reuters)

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Submarine deal is delayed

FROM BRUCE CLARK
IN MOSCOW

RUSSIA, reacting to strong Western criticism, said yesterday that its proposed submarine deliveries to Iran had been delayed by financial disputes but there was nothing wrong with such sales in principle.

A foreign trade official told Tass that "certain difficulties" in financial relations with Iran had delayed the deal. The question of selling Russian diesel submarines to Tehran was, at the moment, not "on the agenda". Western countries had feared that the delivery of up to three Kilo class submarines to Iran — decided on before the Soviet Union broke up — could upset the balance of power in the Gulf.

However, Andrei Kozyrev, the Russian foreign minister, normally one of the most pro-Western members of the leadership, argued in New York on Thursday night that the deliveries would promote stability and increase Moscow's leverage over Iran. He seems to have been unmoved by representations from Lawrence Eagleburger, the acting US Secretary of State. An official at Mr Kozyrev's ministry said Washington's protest simply reflected its desire to re-enter the Iranian arms market.

Defence experts said the Kilo submarines were a "best seller" for Soviet naval manufacturers and had been delivered or promised to Poland, Algeria, Romania and India. Their main function was to fire torpedoes, but it was suspected they could be used to fire surface-to-air missiles. It was also conceivable that they could be deployed to launch low-yield nuclear devices, although it would be unusual to use a conventionally powered submarine for that purpose.

Evidence that Iranian submariners have undergone training in Riga, Latvia, suggests that the deal is at an advanced stage. Commanders at the Riga naval base have been evasive when asked by their Western opposite numbers who was being trained there.

The dispute highlights a

dilemma of economic reform. For several former Soviet republics arms will be one of the few products that are internationally competitive for the foreseeable future.

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Bush rejects Contra charge by second intelligence aide

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Bush struggled yesterday to fend off a barrage of damaging new charges that he lied in claiming he was "out of the loop" during the Iran-Contra scandal.

Howard Teicher, a former National Security Council aide to Ronald Reagan, then president, joined Richard Secord, a key figure in the arms-for-hostages affair, in asserting that Vice-President Bush had known exactly what was going on, saying he had briefed Mr Bush several times.

The Clinton camp was privately delighted by developments that undermine Republican assaults on the Democrat's draft evasions. Deliberately echoing the president's challenge to Mr Clinton, it demanded that Mr Bush

should "come clean with the American people". Al Gore, Mr Clinton's running mate, said there was now much evidence that Mr Bush was "not only in the loop, he was taking the illegal side of the argument".

The White House and officials in Mr Bush's troubled campaign called Mr Secord's allegations "outrageous" and accused him of seeking publicity for his new book on the affair.

Mr Bush insisted that he had "levelled with the American people" and described Mr Secord's charges as "all speculation". He argued that any wrongdoing would have been unearthed during the intermittent Iran-Contra investigations.

Mr Secord, a retired Air

Force major general and intelligence worker convicted for his arms-brokering role in the scandal, countered that the congressional enquiries had largely ignored Mr Bush because they considered him a minor player. Mr Secord's book, published yesterday, cites circumstantial evidence to suggest that Mr Bush pushed the Iran initiative forward.

In June 1986, a frustrated President Reagan stopped all further arms shipments to Iran. On July 29, Amiram Nir, an Israeli counter-terrorism expert briefed Mr Bush in Jerusalem on developments in Iran. The next day Mr Reagan approved a new arms shipment. Mr Secord quotes both Nir, now dead, and

Oliver North — the main go-between in negotiations between Washington and Tehran — as attributing Mr Reagan's change of heart to Mr Bush's intervention.

In other developments, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Ross Perot had decided to announce his "reluctant" reentry into the presidential race on Monday. The Texas billionaire claims that neither Mr Bush nor Mr Clinton were prepared to confront America's economic problems, although the Clinton camp is still said to be considering a revision of its economic programme.

A Louis Harris poll yesterday indicated that Mr Clinton was leading Mr Bush by 53 percent to 38, while in a three-way race Mr Clinton leads by 45 per cent to 31, with Mr Perot on 20. Mr Perot has no chance of winning, but there is no consensus on whether his candidature would hurt Mr Bush or Mr Clinton most. However, it would distract media attention when Mr Bush is campaigning all-out to cut Mr Clinton's lead and make it harder for Mr Bush to run a purely negative campaign against Mr Clinton lest Democrats simply switch to Mr Perot.

Mr Perot's state co-ordinators converge in Dallas this weekend formally to ask him to run. He has arranged several television appearances on Monday and Tuesday and is negotiating to buy a 30-minute block of network time next week.

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN KUWAIT CITY

MUHAMMAD Wasif's popular gift shop began making "Kuwait Loves George Bush" T-shirts two weeks ago and he has sold out.

"It is because of the November election. Everyone here is very worried that Mr Bush will be beaten by Bill Clinton and they want to do everything to show how much we support him," Mr Wasif said as he promised customers that new stocks would be ready early next week.

Although the Kuwaitis have their own watershed election in less than two weeks, equal

to not more attention is being directed to the presidential contest in the United States and the fear that their Gulf war saviour will be put out of office. "If I had the opportunity to go to the US and give my vote to Mr Bush, I would not hesitate," said Ibrahim al-Fahd, a retired army colonel and one of a huge majority of Kuwaitis convinced that Mr Clinton would weaken America's military presence in the Gulf and tilt White House policy towards Israel.

Officials at the seafort American embassy have been

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Guzmán fights on from cage

FROM CORINNE SCHMITT
IN LIMA

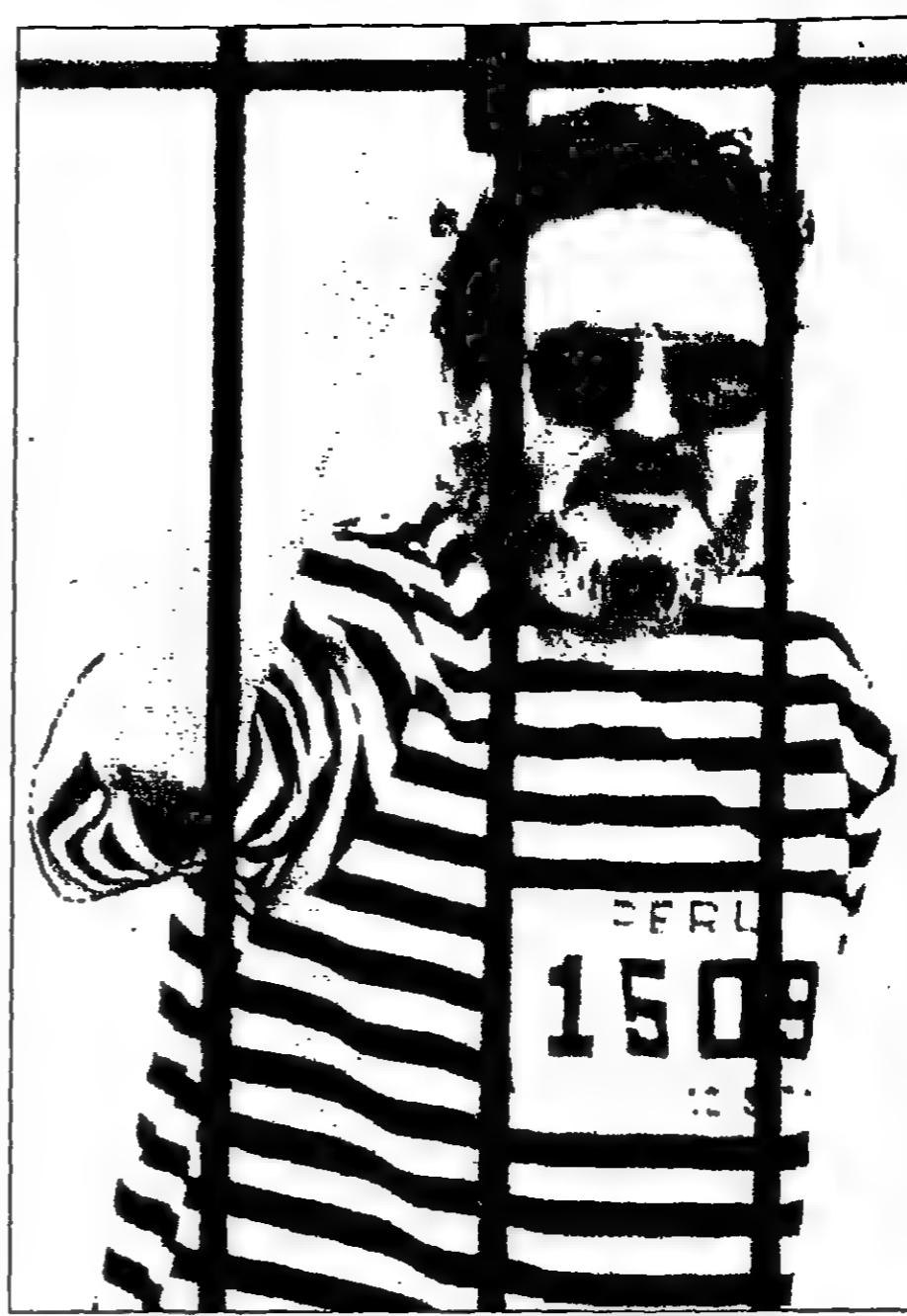
PERUVIAN police "presented" Abimael Guzmán, the Shining Path guerrilla leader, to the press in Lima yesterday and let him give a furious speech promising "worldwide proletarian revolution".

From inside an iron cage welded to the corner of a police building patio, Señor Guzmán shouted: "The old Peruvian state is a paper tiger, it is rotten."

Peru's anti-terrorist police, who arrested Señor Guzmán and five other rebel leaders almost two weeks ago, often "present" captured terrorist suspects. Yesterday's carnival atmosphere reflected the government's campaign to break down the Guzmán mystique. The black-barred cage and the old-fashioned, striped prison uniform clearly were aimed at a people awed by Señor Guzmán after 12 years of terrorism.

The guerrilla leader founded Shining Path at the end of the 1960s and his Maoist sect started its armed struggle in 1980. Since then, 23,000 people have been killed.

Señor Guzmán said that his capture, which "some think is a great defeat, is... simply a bend in the road. We will triumph." His face flushed by the afternoon sun, he told his followers to "continue the tasks" established by the leadership. He ended: "The people's war will triumph."



Bars and stripes: Abimael Guzmán, leader of the Shining Path rebels, denouncing the Peruvian government at an appearance staged for the press by his captors

Britain joins the mission to Mars

BY NICK NUTTALL
TECHNOLOGY
CORRESPONDENT

A TINY piece of British precision engineering has begun a 450-million-mile space odyssey, part of Nasa's mission to photograph the entire surface of Mars.

The record-breaking instrument, called a pressure modulator infra-red radiometer, blasted off from Cape Canaveral on Nasa's Mars Observer last yesterday. It will aid Nasa's experiments to discover any signs that life might once have existed on the planet. The mission will also seek out possible sites for future robot and manned landings.

The instrument has been built in collaboration with the Jet Propulsion Laboratory at Pasadena, California, by a team led by Fred Taylor in Oxford University's physics department. It is capable of analysing the Martian atmosphere for water vapour and dust. It will also measure the atmosphere's pressure and temperature.

Stephen Lewis, a support scientist at the university who will help to analyse the instrument's findings, said it should provide new insights into the planet's water cycle and answer the riddle of why the environment on Mars developed differently from Earth's. "It will scan the atmosphere of Mars... one of the big questions is why the planet has so little water. If you map water vapour in the atmosphere you might be able to identify which region of the planet is creating it and where it may be absorbed," he said. Understanding the water cycle of Mars is crucial if man is ever to colonise the planet.

When lift-off was briefly delayed, scientists were understandably anxious about the \$980 million (£560 million) mission, which will last three years and is Nasa's first to Mars in 17 years. The opportunity to send a spacecraft to the planet comes only once every 26 months, when Mars and Earth are correctly aligned, and the spacecraft needed to be on its way by October 13 if it were not to be delayed for two years.

The two-and-a-half-ton Mars Observer will be manoeuvred into a near-polar orbit 235 miles above Mars. It is to make measurements for a full Martian year, the equivalent of 687 Earth days, and is the most sophisticated US spacecraft ever sent to Mars. Among other equipment it bristles with cameras able to resolve objects just a few yards wide. Leonard Fisk, Nasa's chief scientist, said: "The geological history of the planet, and in some sense its climatological history, is written on the surface, and so when you make measurements from space you get a measure of how that history evolved."

Los Angeles pioneer black mayor to quit

BY MARTIN FLETCHER

TOM Bradley, the Los Angeles mayor who united his disparate city only to watch it fall apart in this spring's riots, is to stand down after 20 years.

Mr Bradley, 73, a former policeman and one of the first black men to lead a big American city, told a news conference that he would not stand for a sixth term next June because it was time to "pass the torch to new leadership".

Against a backdrop of Watertown's Vietnam war and Los Angeles' Watts riots, the sharecropper's son won office in 1973 by uniting the city's Southside blacks and Westside Jews who were excluded from the white-elite conservative administration of Mayor Sam Yorty that had ruled for 12 years. The celebrated "Bradley coalition" went on to become a model for civic reform. It built alliances with the city's business and trade union leaders, Democrats and Republicans, rich and poor.

Mr Bradley's last term has been marred by a series of scandals, including a \$100,000 bribe from a black businessman, and by the recent killing of a black man by a police officer. He has also been criticised for his handling of the riot.

Los Angeles grew and prospered, with the 1984 Olympics its zenith. However, the seeds of this year's race riots were also sown in the mid-1980s. Federal funding for cities was cut, tax-raising powers were circumscribed and there was a huge influx of poor immigrants. Mr Bradley also became embroiled in a bitter feud with Daryl Gates, the abrasive chief of a Los Angeles police force with significant racist elements.

The riots "bore at my heart", Mr Bradley said during his announcement. "I will not be at peace until we have healed our wounds and rebuilt our neighbourhoods."

"Los Angeles gave life to the impossible dream," he said. "She cast aside appeals to fear and bigotry and elected me... LA proved some people wrong — the people who said a black man couldn't go to college, couldn't rise through the ranks of the police force, couldn't attain the highest public offices. Wrong."



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Bonn and Paris weary of delays

Brittan warns of EC two-speed 'nightmare'

By MICHAEL BINNION, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

A TWO-SPEED Europe that left Britain in the slow lane would be a "nightmare", Sir Leon Brittan, the senior British commissioner in Brussels, said yesterday. It would bring to life a recurrent anxiety for British prime ministers that a tightly-knit group of countries on the continent would take decisions of huge consequence for British politics and the economy over which they had no control.

Sir Leon said recent German warnings that there could be two speeds in the European Community were intended to send clear signals to Britain that Bonn and Paris would not tolerate an indefinite delay in the ratification of the Maastricht treaty. Sir Leon said Germany was not trying to push Britain into the slow lane. But he said the more talk there was in Britain of Maastricht being dead, the more Paris and Bonn would consider ways of going ahead without Britain.

The nightmare he described was not one where specific things would happen in Europe but where Britain would have much less control over its destiny. "The supreme irony would be that in the name of sovereignty we lose effective sovereignty," he said.

He also warned the country not to play dog in the manger.

Britain was the only country with an opt-out from the treaty on economic and monetary union, the heart of the Maastricht treaty. None of the rest was contentious, and indeed contained much that the government wanted to see. Ratification would therefore bind Britain to economic monetary union, the only contentious element. But a failure to do so would ruin the treaty for all the other member states which wanted union and the rest of the treaty.

"The treaty is tailor-made for British interests and the case for Britain going ahead is extremely strong. However, it is reasonable to want to know that a solution to the Danish problem is possible, if not in the bag," he said.

Sir Leon said Mr Major's commitment to Maastricht was unquestionable, and was wholly unrelated to Britain's holding the EC presidency. He said it was unclear how France and Germany would go ahead without Britain. He cast doubt on talk of a Deutschmark zone of Germany, France and Benelux, saying governments creating such a zone would like to have seats on the board of the Bundesbank.

It was a fact of economic life, unrelated to the exchange-rate mechanism, that interest rates determined in Germany had an effect on all Europe. Pulling out of the ERM would not alter this: the only way to lessen German influence was to set up a bank that set rates for all Europe, which was not a German institution but a European one.

Sir Leon said that the breakdown of the ERM only underlined the case for true monetary union. He was confident that any improvements in the functioning of the ERM and declarations necessary to reassure Danish voters could be made before the Edinburgh summit in December.

He said the European monetary system needed improvement and the government's calls for a fresh look were reasonable. But he added: "Let's not underestimate the benefits of the ERM. It has brought stability for ten years, and in the last two it has given

the permanent members of the security council bear a special responsibility under the UN Charter for the organisation's principal task of maintaining world peace. As a result they have to pay most of the cost of the UN's peacekeeping operations around the world.

But with peacekeeping operations now rapidly expanding, and soon expected to cost \$2.7 billion (£1.58 billion) a year, the five powers are encountering increasing difficulty raising the money. America owes the UN \$209 million in unpaid peacekeeping dues. Russia, too, has recently defaulted and now owes \$282 million in peacekeeping bills.

When the UN set up its ambitious operation to shepherd Cambodia towards democracy last year, the permanent members of the council had to turn to Japan for financing. The financial problem is considered so bad that Boutros Boutros Ghali, the UN secretary-general, insisted that the troop-contributing countries meet the full cost of the operation when the UN force in Bosnia-Herzegovina



On their marks: Helmut Kohl with Friedrich Bohl, the chancellor's minister, before yesterday's debate on the Maastricht treaty in the Bundestag

was expanded earlier this month to protect aid convoys. Britain and the other seven troop contributors may now turn to fellow Nato members, particularly Germany, for help in meeting the cost of the mission.

Germany and Japan, which already has a deal with Asian countries to get itself elected as a non-permanent council member for frequent two-year terms, obviously want a simple expansion of the security council to give them both permanent seats.

But a growing number of large developing countries also want a guaranteed place at the UN's top table.

Brazil is pushing a plan under which Germany and Japan would get permanent seats, along with itself, India,

Egypt and Nigeria. And President Suharto of Indonesia, addressing the general assembly on behalf of non-aligned nations, said the council should be expanded to accommodate new members even if they were not given veto power. "We shall not be mere spectators, nor accept to be sidelined in the currents of historical change now sweeping across the globe," he said.

Another approach is an old Italian proposal to create a single seat for the 12-nation European Community, which now has Britain, France and one non-permanent member, Belgium, on the council. Britain and France are resisting any change in the council's composition, which they of course have the power to veto, with the argument that only

after the end of the Cold war is it finally beginning to work as originally intended.

Citing the unity in the council in the aftermath of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and its work in the former Yugoslavia, British officials repeat the mantra: "Why change a winning team?" The United States, the pre-eminent power on the council, is more willing to take a look at a change in membership. "There is merit to taking a look at the issue," Lawrence Eagleburger, America's acting Secretary of State, said. "but don't expect any quick or easy answers."

Edvard Shevardnadze, the former Soviet foreign minister and now leader of Georgia, yesterday backed Japan and Germany's bid for permanent membership.

NEWS IN BRIEF

New Age ex-wife is sued

New York: A 35,000-year-old prehistoric warrior called Ramtha is effectively on trial in Washington state in the shape of J.Z. Knight, 46, a New Age spiritualist who has made a vast fortune and attracted thousands of followers over the past 15 years by "channeling" the talkative spirit of Ramtha, and marketing it (Ben Macintyre writes).

Ms Knight, the most famous New Age guru in America, is being sued by her former husband, Jeffrey Knight, who claims that she used his belief in Ramtha to browbeat him into accepting a \$120,000 (£70,000) divorce settlement in 1989. He is now suing his former wife for a larger share of the money the couple made out of Ramtha.

The case has brought into question the veracity, or otherwise, of the New Age movement as a whole, whose practitioners made millions of dollars in the 1980s.

Until the age of 30, "JZ" (pronounced to rhyme with crazy), as she is known to her followers, was the suburban wife of a Tacoma dentist; she claims that Ramtha arrived in 1977 in a shower of light, a Cro-Magnon fugitive from Atlantis. Henceforth, Ms Knight was able to summon Ramtha at will, speaking in broken English with an odd gutteral accent, and the disciples (and dollars) multiplied rapidly. Hollywood celebrities, including Linda Evans, star of the soap opera *Dynasty* and the actress Shirley MacLaine, took Ramtha as their guru.

A headquarters for the movement was established in rural Washington state after Ramtha said that space aliens and earthquakes were about to wreck the planet. By the mid-1980s JZ and Jeffrey Knight, her fifth husband, were making more than \$4 million a year.

In 1988, their five-year marriage broke up. In court this week, Mr Knight said he was devastated, less by his wife's desertion, than by the loss of Ramtha who would no longer talk to him. Mr Knight now says his former wife is a fraud and wants a larger share of the profits.

Nuclear tests jeopardised

Washington: Britain's future ability to test and therefore modernise its independent nuclear deterrent has been seriously jeopardised by a vote in the US Congress (Martin Fletcher writes). Despite active, high-level British lobbying over several months, the House has approved a measure that would halt all underground nuclear testing in America by late 1996. Nevada is the UK's sole test site.

Film seized

Hong Kong: Chinese public security officers boarded a Hong Kong police launch yesterday to seize film of an anti-smuggling operation that they carried out in waters off Hong Kong and China, police sources said (AFP).

Deaths order

Beirut: The execution of three Palestinian supporters of Abu Nidal, an opponent of Yassir Arafat, the chairman of the PLO, has been ordered by a self-styled PLO court near Beirut. *An-Nahar* newspaper said. They are accused of murder.

Water link

Nuremberg: The last link in a 2,185-mile inland waterway from the North Sea to the Black Sea was opened here (Reuters).

Deadly haul

Moscow: Thieves have stolen about 500lb of deadly potassium cyanide, enough to poison the population of the former Soviet Union, from a plant in Kirghizia. The Tass news agency reported (Reuters).

Amato budget plan comes under fire

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

THE 1993 austerity budget of Giuliano Amato, the Italian prime minister, came under fire from within his coalition yesterday as the Christian Democrat party accused him of wanting "to liquidate the welfare state".

Militant trade unionists continued to put pressure on their leaders to reject the budget package. The Christian Democrat parliamentary whip, Gerardo Bianco, called on the government "not to liquidate the welfare state". The Christian Democrats have asked their labour minister, Nino Cristoforo, to negotiate a revision of the budget. But yesterday the Socialist environment minister, Carlo Ripa di Meana, emerged from a cabinet meeting and said there would be no substantial changes.

Signor Amato has made it clear he would regard tinkering with the budget excessively as a sign of weakness and has said he will call a vote of confidence to push the package through parliament if necessary.

• Madrid: As Carlos Solchaga, the Spanish economics minister, gave outline details of next year's austere budget proposals after they were approved by the cabinet yesterday, the Bank of Spain was preparing to ease exchange restrictions. The stock exchange crashed to its lowest point in six years on Thursday after Wednesday's measures were announced in a bid to protect the peseta.

On Thursday 300,000 million pesetas was wiped off share values when foreign investors sold after the Bank of Spain restricted free currency movement. Yesterday the fall was checked.

benefits to Britain of lower inflation and interest rates."

Sir Leon said that after the result of the French referendum there was frustration and disappointment in Brussels over the new difficulties for Maastricht ratification. This focused on Britain. But he denied there was any annoyance with the British among other EC members.

Major in crossfire, page 1
Leading article, page 17



Amato: Maastricht must be ratified soon

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French lose patience over UK's dilemma

Fresh aid from Germany won France a respite in the battle for the franc yesterday as the Mitterrand administration moved more openly behind the notion of a Europe with Britain on the outside.

Moderate intervention by the Bundesbank helped to push the franc further upwards against the mark in the European monetary system though the markets continued to bet on a realignment in coming days despite German and French denials. "It's not over," said one French official, "but the speculators have burnt their fingers."

With the franc relatively safe again within the Franco-German fold after the week's battering, French officials did little to dissipate the impact of the thoughts of Helmut Kohl and Jacques Delors, the president of the European Commission, on the benefits of a two-speed Europe. Elisabeth Guigou, the European affairs minister, said it was quite acceptable to see the Community following a new path since this "already existed" with the loose timetable for bringing the economies of member states into line for a single currency.

A fresh approach could be healthy because the momentum of the stronger and more pro-Community states would pull along the more reluctant and weaker ones, she said in a newspaper interview. However, Mrs Guigou, who was the government's leading campaigner in the Maastricht referendum, said France understood John Major's political dilemma and wanted to do everything to encourage rapid ratification by Britain.

Some officials noted, however, that France could interpret the Maastricht treaty to mean that it could be put into application without the endorsement of Britain and Denmark. Their example was

With the franc shored up, thoughts of a two-track Europe seem attractive to official Paris, writes Charles Bremner

the 1919 Versailles peace treaty which took effect without the ratification of the United States.

The French business world and media are voicing impatience over Britain's loss of enthusiasm for Maastricht. *Le Monde* said the Community must decide on a strategy very quickly. "M. Delors demonstrated some clear thinking when he implied that France and Germany will take the lead if certain countries find excuses for slowing down application of the treaty." The French media have been painting an image of a Britain in crisis with lurid reports of lay-offs and economic collapse. "The British disaster," said the headline in the *Quotidien de Paris* yesterday over a report on the troubles at Rolls Royce and British Aerospace.

• However, the French government's haste to rush to ratification smacks of a *faire en avant* (rushing forward to escape), some commentators are saying. They see it as driven by mounting concern over opposition to the painful economic policy which has enabled France to keep up with Germany in recent years. The political forces which led almost half the electorate to reject Maastricht have homed in this week on what they see as the exploitation of France by an over-powerful Germany.

Germany's high interest rates are, they point out, draining France of the financial oxygen it needs to recover from the highest unemployment among well-off countries in Europe this month.

piece of conservative France and a supporter of Maastricht, yesterday wondered: "How will we get out of the Franco-German trap into which we are rushing?" If Germany fails to drop its interest rates, France will be "faced with a choice between plunging deeper into depression for the relative benefit of Germany or getting out of this disastrous relationship and trying, like Britain, to follow another economic policy."

Similar thoughts are being voiced by the populist champions of the anti-Maastricht campaign, among them Philippe Séguin and Charles Pasqua, the two Gaullist dissidents. With France now entering a campaign period, ahead of parliamentary elections next March and possibly a

presidential election at any time, President Mitterrand's government cannot ignore the mounting tension over what millions of voters see as German hegemony.

The French political pulse began beating faster yesterday after Jacques Chirac, the leader of the Gaullist RPR party and the opposition's leading candidate for the presidency, insisted that President Mitterrand resign if his Socialist party loses power in the parliamentary elections.

He served an uneasy stint as the head of a "cohabitation" government under M. Mitterrand from 1986-88. His demand, though seen as a political manoeuvre against rival opposition leaders, raises the prospect of a constitutional crisis. Under the constitution of the Fifth Republic, tailor-made for de Gaulle in 1958, there is no mechanism for resolving a showdown between the parliament and the president.

Designer de

Water link

Nuremberg: The last link in a 2,185-mile inland waterway from the North Sea to the Black Sea was opened here (Reuters).

Deadly haul

Moscow: Thieves have stolen about 500lb of deadly potassium cyanide, enough to poison the population of the former Soviet Union, from a plant in Kirghizia. The Tass news agency reported (Reuters).

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ATOL 264

Roman racers threaten to undo the Colosseum's restoration

Efforts to restore the arena may lead to confrontation with the city's motorists. John Phillips writes from Rome

RESTORATION of the crumbling Colosseum began at last this week, thanks to generous private sponsorship. But archaeologists fear the 40 billion lire (£18 million) rescue operation may be wasted effort unless streets surrounding the amphitheatre are closed to traffic, and the latter-day charioteers of Rome.

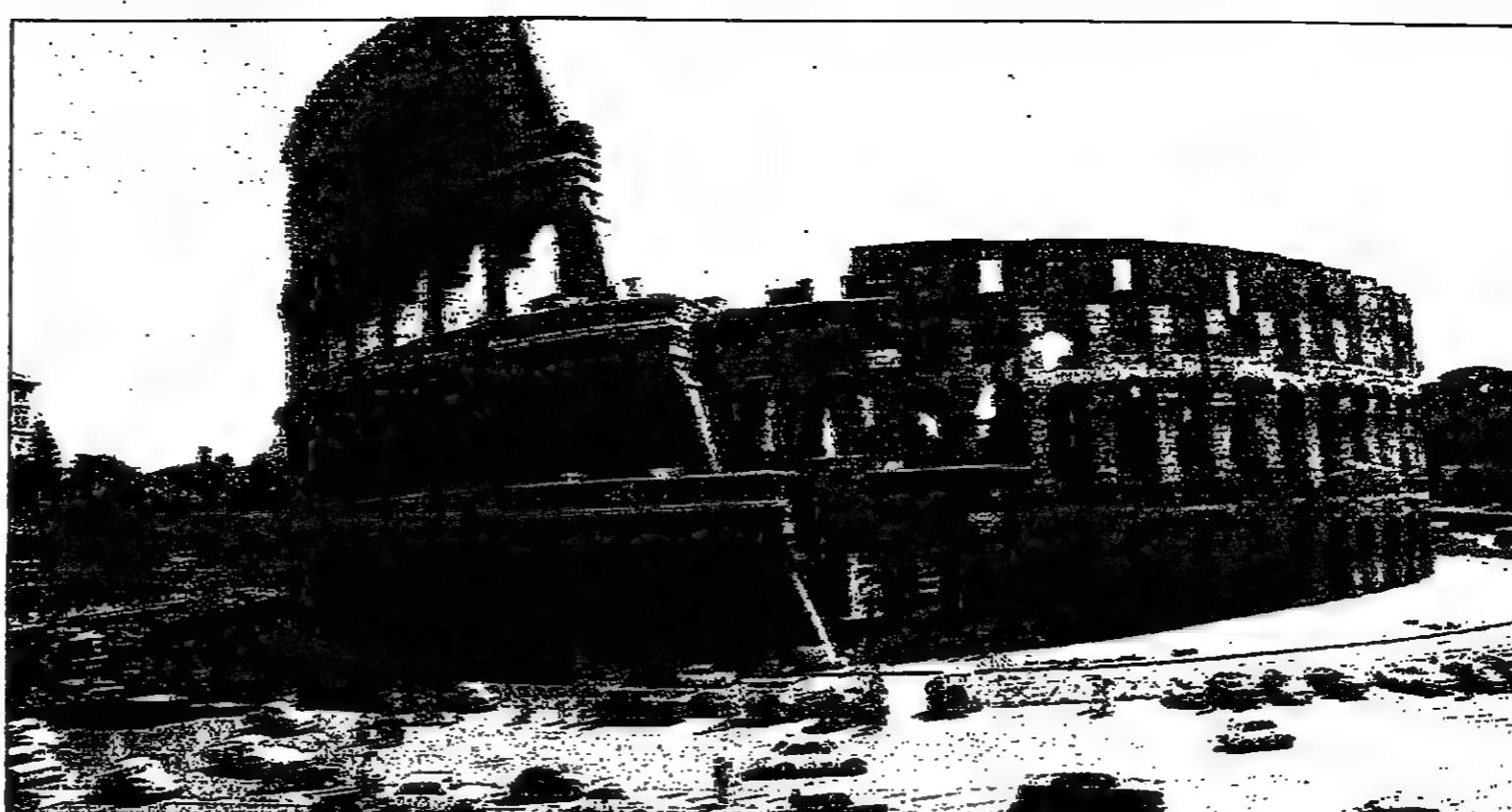
"It is depressing to see this," said Pina Fazio, the head of a team of ten specialists from the Central Institute of Restoration of Rome, as she watched the frantic flow of cars and buses along the Via dei Fori Imperiali from the first floor of the monument. "We can't help thinking what happens if we try to clean the Colosseum and it returns to the way it was," she said.

The scaffolding bears the logo of the Banca di Roma, created this year after the merger of three banks as part of Italy's preparations for a single European market. In June, Adriano La Regina, the archaeology superintendent of Rome, issued an urgent

appeal for funding to save the 1,800-year-old Colosseum. After being courted assiduously by Francesco Sissini, the director-general of the ministry for cultural heritage, the new bank agreed to put up the cash in return for reference to the project in advertising.

The scheme aims not just to stabilise the Flavian arena and make good the effects of centuries of erosion, but to restore it to something approaching its former glory. For the first time since the fourth century, the original wooden floor on which gladiators fought and Christians were thrown to the lions will be reconstructed.

But Professor La Regina said that throwing money at the Colosseum would not be enough unless the Via dei Fori Imperiali ceases to be used as a racetrack by private motorists. The wide avenue stretching from the Piazza Venezia to the amphitheatre was constructed by Mussolini so that the dictator could stage stirring Fascist parades alongside the Forum. Profes-



Crumbling beauty: work on the 1,800-year-old Roman amphitheatre is at risk from tourists, car exhaust pollution — and earthquakes

sor La Regina has written to the Rome city council asking them to close the boulevard to private traffic and move

away from the Colosseum the stops where yellow buses belch out diesel fumes while disgorging tourists. Officials

at the professor's office say there has been no response yet from the council, which evidently is loath to become

unpopular with Roman motorists by making the already complicated one-way system more frustrating. There is

speculation the council wants to hold a referendum of residents of the historic city centre on closing the avenue,

a process that could take at least several months.

Piero Negrossi, the architect in charge of the restoration project, doubts it will be finished in his lifetime. "It will probably require four years to take off, to really start. As for finishing, future generations will probably have to think about that," he said.

The state appeal for funds prompted a flurry of alarmed Italian and foreign media reports, claiming the Colosseum was in imminent danger of collapse. Some went so far as to quote the Venerable Bede and his terrible prophecy of 12 centuries ago when he said: "When the Colosseum falls, Rome shall fall. When Rome falls, the world shall end."

Dr Fazio laughs and says "no" when asked if the Colosseum could really fall down. But when asked about the risk from earthquakes, she acknowledges that "everything can happen". The Colosseum has survived four earthquakes. The last was in 1703. Seismologists say they have been occurring every 300 or 400 years. If the pattern persists, the next one may be due by the end of this century.

Leading article, page 17

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Clifford Longley

Searching for the real Jesus is a fruitless quest

Our highly secular age rejoices in its indifference to religion, but is nonetheless fascinated by the wilder possibilities. This month has had an open season on Jesus. Numerous column inches and air minutes have been devoted to A.N. Wilson's new book about (indeed, called) Jesus: not many fewer went to Barbara Thiering's *Jesus: A New Interpretation*. The reviews have added further thoughts from distinguished writers to the already massive library of analysis on this subject.

As one reviewer remarked, inventing theories about Jesus is like a tabloid newspaper's reporting of the royal — unconstrained by the possibility of rebuttal. The pleasure to be had in debunking things that are sacred to earlier generations partly accounts for it, like small boys swearing in church. But there is real mystery to explain: neither Wilson nor Thiering nor others on the same path are merely temping fate out of bravado. They are engaged in a different mission: the "deconstruction" of Christian narratives in an effort to filter supposed truth from untruth. If what the church traditionally taught about Jesus can no longer be trusted, they seem to be saying, must he simply be dismissed as an uninteresting obscurity or is there another way of looking at him?

Is the magnetism surrounding the man artificial, induced by centuries of church indoctrination, or is there a reality to it that cannot be washed away by reductionism? The motive for this search is clearly to find ammunition to support a view already formed. That view is, by definition, not the church's official one.

Like Mr Wilson, the public's desire is to try to hold on to "Jesus" while letting go of "Christ". The humanity and the divinity are to be split, in order to discard the latter. What splices the process is the thought that the ecclesiastical powers-that-be — including the Vatican — would want to stop this game if they could.

The history of the quest for a "historical Jesus" is itself long, and A.N. Wilson is not the first to find it ultimately fruitless. The fatal handicap is the lack of any independent source. The New Testament was written by Christians for Christians, and is therefore not an attempt at a straight historical narration but a Christian interpretation (or several interpretations) of events written for purposes other than journalism. That is why the four Gospels differ so much, and why they occasionally disagree. But if a new non-Christian interpretation can only be constructed by picking and mixing from those shelves, on what other basis is the selection to be made?

Wilson, Thiering, and before them the Jewish scholar Geza Vermes have done one valuable service, by placing Jesus back into his historical setting as a Jewish inhabitant of Roman-occupied Palestine. It becomes clear that many of the things he was reported to have said were not original, but were what might be expected from a holy man steeped in Jewish literature and spirituality. The conventional view sees Jesus on the fringe of the sect called the Pharisees, and the eccentric view (such as Thiering's) makes him an Essene at Qumran at the time of the Dead Sea scrolls.

The assumption is that the more that is known about the Jewish religion of the day the better can Jesus be pictured. This Judaizing of Jesus is thoroughly healthy, but not because it brings him closer. In so far as Christianity has rejected a Semitic Jesus in favour of a white Anglo-Saxon one, it has betrayed its origins, prepared the way for anti-Semitism, turned Christianity into an ideology and harnessed it to the cause of Western cultural colonialism. Those who seek a purified Christianity may welcome a move away from that, but it makes Jesus less accessible by making him even more remote, ancient and foreign.

This further frustrates the search for a historical personality whose biography could be written. His elusiveness may have good reasons. Below a certain surface level, the New Testament is resistant to textual archaeology. It is as if the reconstruction of Jesus's life on purpose. They saw A.N. Wilson and Barbara Thiering, and all the other deconstructors and reconstructors since Albert Schweitzer, coming. Why they felt they had to conceal their subject behind such a screen is part of the mystery of the origins of Christianity, or part of the message. But, as a result, all biographies of Jesus end up as fiction, whatever their author's first intention.

The campaign against genetically-engineered food is ignorant and misdirected, argues Nigel Hawkes

Scientists in the kitchen

Yesterday the Minister of Agriculture, John Gummer, announced that he is setting up an expert group to advise on the ethics of genetically engineered foods. Advice on the morality of the new foods is crowding in from every side, not all of it very soundly-based. In the United States pressure groups have named them "Frankenfoods", conjuring up the image of a mad scientist stirring a pot full of poisons.

So far, Britain has been spared the backlash against biotechnology, but given the proclivities of the animal rights' activists that may not last for ever. The Germans are so nervous on the subject that many genetic engineering experiments cannot even be carried out there.

Thinking as it is to dismiss the opposition as a bunch of malcontents, it would be a mistake. The food industry that gave us the dishcloth-flavoured, hamburger and the tasteless tomato has long since lost the benefit of any doubt. What is at issue, however, is whether genetic engineering

new crops before they can be harvested. For two years running they have succeeded in razing to the ground crops of genetically-engineered maize being grown by a seed and plant-breeding business.

In both Britain and America, the regulatory authorities have adopted a permissive stance towards the new techniques. Not many people may know it, but there are already two genetically-engineered food products on the market in Britain, though neither is intended for direct consumption. One is a strain of yeast used in making bread, while the other is an enzyme used in cheese-making.

In America, the Food and Drug Administration has decided to treat the novel foods no differently from those produced conventionally, a decision that has whipped the opponents of biotechnology into a fury. Re-

cently an FDA official seeking to explain the policy at a meeting in Madison, Wisconsin — not normally considered a trouble-spot — was howled down by 30 or 40 people alerted by the Pure Food Campaign.

Among the first genetically-engineered products in America and Britain will be tomatoes, a fruit that seems to have had more than its share of improvements over the years. In both cases, genetic engineering has been used to remove the tomato's natural propensity to produce a rotting enzyme, polygalacturonase. This means that the fruit can be harvested, stored, shipped, shelved and finally shopped without losing its pristine

campaigners two years running in the Netherlands is a maize, altered so that it is resistant to a common herbicide. The idea is to make it easier for farmers to spray against weeds without killing the crop, thus increasing yield.

Other changes in the pipeline may make plants more resistant to pests or disease, able to survive drought or frost, or to produce sweeter, more nutritious, or longer-lasting crops. In Japan, they are persuading soybeans and rice to produce more of the vitamins and amino acids that are an ideal food should have.

These will no longer be foods but "nutraceuticals", producing a perfect nutritional balance and also able to cure or improve medical conditions. Already, argue the researchers, nutraceuticals exist in the form of low-

fat milks with added protein and calcium. Genetic engineering aims at the same kind of product, by different means.

The scientists working on products like these must be watched, but is it a moral issue or simply one of food safety? To the opponents of biotechnology, it is unnatural or immoral to interfere with the genetic inheritance of a species to improve it, though in truth this is what conventional plant and animal breeders have been doing for centuries. What is the bloodstock industry for but to breed faster horses than nature intended?

Biotechnology may have risks but that does not make it morally questionable. Cool analysis, not the frenzies of the Dutch activists or easy sloganising of the Pure Food Campaign, is what is needed. Genetically-engineered food can be good food, or bad; but it is not essentially different and its producers do not deserve to be anathematised by those who pose as our moral guardians.

When all the world's an ass

Simon Jenkins dreams that our political masters' dearest plans were turned inside out in one disenchanted week

So was it Coriolanus? Or Julius Caesar? Or one of the Henrys? There is no party game so much fun as marching Shakespeare to a political crisis. But what of the past month? There is no argument. A charabanc of cabinet ministers should be delivered forthwith to the National Theatre for Robert Lepage's brilliant *Midsummer Night's Dream*. They will feel at home: the actors hurled at each other for much of the evening. But this is no fairytale dream. This is the exorcism of nightmare. The magic is jet black. Real life is on stage, mere fantasy is mirrored elsewhere. The Bard is at his most devastating. And as for Puck, that cheeky Bundesbanker, that architect of economic debacle... but more anon.

First to the subplot and David Mellor. He might indeed reflect with Lysander on the tortuous path of true love, not least from his good friend John Major. We had hardly time to greet this minister of culture when the jaws of darkness devoured him up and quick bright things came to confusion. I thought he was doing rather well as heritage minister. He passed no state secrets to foreign powers. His private life was irrelevant to his work. And as for past "freebies", is every invoice of every ministerial holiday (and every civil service one) now to be scrutinised for years past?

Half the stories about Mr Mellor were simply made up, on the assumption that he would not sue. Those that were true were hardly sucking offences. The punishment is absurdly in excess of the crime.

But Mr Major's summer has been spent on banks where wild thyme grows: he has long loved the tabloids and today must be purple with love's wound. Like

Harold Wilson before him, he sips with the devils of the popular press — and does so with far too short a spoon. A strong prime minister would this week have flicked those ludicrous front pages aside with contempt. Nothing new had emerged to Mr Mellor's discredit since the prime minister's last message of support. Newspapers, colluding only in the frenzy of their rivalry, merely decided that trying to get rid of Mr Mellor was more fun than covering Maastricht, the ERM and the biggest government debacle of the decade.

The press was roaring for all the world like Bottom's sucking dove. The hypocrisy was monumental: Mr Mellor was a "political embarrassment" only because the press made him one. All else was humbug. The prime minister may regard the tabloids as holy writ, surrogates for democracy, but no American or French or German politician does so. The best way to handle the tabloids is not to read them. As it was, Mr Major let them mug him of a good minister and friend.

The prime minister was floored by nothing more substantial than a rolled up newspaper and a moist eye from the 1922 Committee. A most lamentable comedy indeed, a most cruel death.

That bad dream ended in whimper. But it was only a subplot. Robert Lepage's Puck is still waiting centre stage, a little, menacing, androgynous, oozing evil. Angela Laurier emerges onto a blackened Olivier stage



awash with slime, an acrobat by nothing more substantial than a rolled up newspaper and a moist eye from the 1922 Committee. A most lamentable comedy indeed, a most cruel death.

Now we can see unfolding all Europe into black disorder.

Angela Laurier's Puck is no rustic mischief-maker. She is chaos. Performing miracles of

contortion, she scampers on all fours, legs arched forward over her shoulders until her head peers out from her crutch. Thus she scatters her herbs of lunacy, taunting today's politicians, "Lurk I in a gossamer's bowl, in the very likeness of a roasted crab." Now we can see unfolding all the midsummer madness of the past three months. Is that Nick Bottom or Norman Lamont transformed by Puck's black art into a whole swamp of economic garbage? He cries out for oats, bay, honey-bags, scratches, as if public expenditure knew no bounds. He wakes, and wonders

what hit him. Lepage's handling of this majestic play is in direct line of descent from Peter Brook's of 1970, and from Jan Kott's revolutionary essay on Shakespeare as modernist. Its essence is to eliminate the gap between period illusion and contemporary reality.

At the National, the join is soon invisible. Oberon cries "What hast thou done!" as he surveys Puck's demolition of his policies. "This is thy negligence." But negligence, or wilful knavery? Who is to blame? Since the last week in September will long be celebrated as the Feast of the Unknown Scapgoat, the audience could be forgiven a snigger. Puck merely promises to "put a girdle round the world in forty minutes" — and drive stoning off the rails?

Mud hurles left and right. Poor Bottom slithers to the floor bewildered: "I have had a dream past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass." And when all have awakened from the dream, this ragged cabinet of actors must stage their tragical-historical-comical farce, otherwise known as an emergency debate. Lamont and Smith, Pyramus and Thisbe across the dispatch box, with Madam Speaker as the Wall resplendent. "Eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath," she cries.

When John Major rose to speak on Thursday afternoon I thought I heard Oberon murmur to his colleagues. "Think no more of this night's accidents but as the fierce vexations of a dream." Perhaps that is how he would like it all to seem. But what accidents, what vexations and what a dream! I am more inclined to side with Puck. That was the devil that sorted them out in the end, the devil that has the best tune in the play. "Lord, what fools these mortals be!"

...and moreover

PHILIP HOWARD

By abolishing the cane in British schools, the European Court of Human Rights is in the process of ending not only our oldest blood sport, but also one of our oddest sources of literary inspiration. Since English letters began to be autobiographical six centuries ago, a recurrent theme has been tales of rod and birch, of stiff upper lips and loose lower jaws, of the camaraderie and courage forged on the flogging block to produce the strong, silent neurotics who ran the empire. Like other practices, it is an English vice.

Dr Johnson, who knew the birch from both ends as teacher and taught, observed: "There is now less flogging in our great schools than formerly, but then less is learned there; so that what the boys get at one end they lose at the other." So even 250 years ago men were complaining (wrongly) about declining standards in education and discipline. Roald Dahl may well have caught his jaundiced view of the adult world from the cruel floggings pleasantly inflicted on all corners by Geoffrey Fisher, then headmaster of Repton, later Archbishop of Canterbury, and memorably exposed in Dahl's memoir of his childhood.

When Anthony Trollope's old headmaster failed to recognise him after he had left school, Anthony observed that he supposed the headmaster was more familiar with a different part of his anatomy. Shelley was a heroic rebel against the lynch mob of Eton (the tabloid rat-pack is the true successor of Dr Keate); but

performed by the Head Master with a birch, after a procession across school yard to the flogging-block with the porter and two sixth-form prefects. You bled, the birch was splintered, and it was presented to you afterwards, your parents being charged 50p for it on next half's bill. Flogging was inflicted only for capital offences, such as turning in three unsatisfactory pieces of written work in a row.

Cyril Connolly recorded the system: "My own election was broken under the strain of beatings at night, and bullying by day; all we could hope for was to achieve peace with seniority and then start beating in our turn." Orwell, another King's Scholar, was beaten when he was 18, just outside sixth form, by boys in his senior election "for being late at prayers".

At Sherborne, Cecil Day Lewis, during his second term in the lower sixth, was flogged for hubris, a common floggable offence. He was informed ten weeks beforehand, so that he could look forward to it. At Westminster, Gibbon purchased a knowledge of Latin syntax at the cost of many years and some blood. On his first day at Christ's Hospital, Charles Lamb, aged seven, saw a boy in fetters in the dungeons, visited twice weekly by the beadle for thrashing. His offence was to have run away.

I hope the European Court realises what it is up to, in abolishing this peculiarly English source of literary inspiration. English writers evidently need something to get them going.

Skin deep in trouble

ANY hopes of a quiet life in the Bermuda Triangle have quickly vanished for the accident-prone Lord Waddington, the new governor of the Caribbean island. Only three weeks after donning his plumed hat, Waddington has become embroiled in one of the biggest controversies in years: allegations of fixing and racism in the Miss Bermuda Islands beauty competition.

Waddington, former Home Secretary and Leader of the Lords, was asked to crown the winner of the pageant earlier this week. This turned out to be Diana Mitchell, 24, the first white winner for many years and one of only a handful of white girls in the line-up of 19. She will now go forward to the Miss World final in December... in South Africa.

Waddington, unaware of the passion that beauty competitions generate in Bermuda, dutifully stepped forward to place the crown on the winner's head. As he did so three-quarters of the 750-strong audience at the Southampton Princess Hotel booed and many walked out. Most of the 19 contestants burst into tears; 16 of them have hired lawyers and are suing the organisers alleging irregularities in the competition.

The judges, branded racist by the contestants, learnt the name of the winner at the same time as the audience. Some have withheld their agreement to Mitchell taking the title.

John Smith had better take a map with him when he goes to the Labour Party conference this weekend. The party's conference guide was lyrical about the attractions of Brighton night-life and includes a "detailed location plan of the Brighton conference centre". That should be useful for the Tories who meet in the town next month. The Labour conference is in Blackpool.

Mellor's swansong

A POIGNANT tribute will be paid to David Mellor on Sunday evening. It is the last interview he gave before resigning his job as national heritage secretary and will be broadcast in the final episode in Radio 4's series *Ministering to the Arts*.

The interview, conducted by Sir Roy Strong, was recorded on Tuesday. By Wednesday, as Mellor's resignation became increasingly likely, a second version of the introduction was made. Sir Roy says Mellor gave no signal that he expected to be on the back benches to discuss certain issues raised in the book — the lack of democratic control within Britain and the European Community.

handled his brief very well. I couldn't help noticing his extraordinarily beautiful hands," Sir Roy says.

Sir Roy has not met Mellor's replacement, Peter Brooke, but is keen to interview him for a second series. "I very much hope that Peter Brooke will lead a blameless life and build on Mellor's achievements," Strong says.

Brooke, best known for his untroubled rendition of *O My Darling Clementine* on a Dublin chat show, has recently started collecting works of art in a modest way. He has imposed a price limit of £250 on any single purchase. Rescued from the ignominy of the back benches, Brooke may well have reflected on the fact that not only Mellor but five of his predecessors as arts minister, Paul Channon, Norman St John-Stevens, Lord Gowrie, Richard Luce and Tim Rennett, have finished on the political scrap heap. But as Mellor says himself in Sunday's broadcast: "A nation at ease with itself is a nation which doesn't despise leisure".

Perfect timing

Anthony Sampson, whose updated classic *The Essential Anatomy of Britain* is to be published next month, was forced to postpone an interview with John Major just as the prime minister decided he could no longer sustain Britain's economic policy.

The book, which has been regarded as a seminal work on current affairs since first being published 30 years ago, was completed immediately after the collapse of the pound and the French referendum last weekend. But on September 16, Sampson was due to have an audience at Downing Street to discuss certain issues raised in the book — the lack of democratic control within Britain and the European Community.

"It was really rather comic," said Sampson yesterday. "He said he would be delighted to see me at 4pm and at 2.30 I received a call to say he was terribly sorry but he could not make it that afternoon.

THE ESSENTIAL ANATOMY OF BRITAIN

What I found particularly amusing was the fact that a main aspect of the book concentrates on the obsession of political leaders with short-term markets. John Major was, of course, completely submerged by the markets at that time."

Alma pater?

IN 1979 when St Anne's College, Oxford, accepted its first male students after a century of blue stockings, one hopeful male fresher was turned away at the gate by the beadle who assumed he was a delivery boy. Tonight St Anne's, which numbers Tina Brown, Jancis Robinson and Libby Purves amongst its old girls, is hosting a black-tie dinner for 100 of its former students, the first co-ed intake, who graduated ten years ago. Ruth Deech, principal of the college, says the dinner is making one concession to the inevitable result of mixing the sexes: "Yes, we will have a baby room with a baby intercom."



PUSHING BY BONN

Nothing is as calculated to provoke anger and arouse visceral fears in this country as threats from Bonn and Paris to leave Britain behind in the slow lane towards European unity. As Sir Leon Brittan said yesterday, the recurrent nightmare of every British prime minister is a continental cabal whose decisions would determine British politics and the economy. After this week's remarks by John Major and Chancellor Kohl, the gap between London and Bonn is now as wide as it ever was in Margaret Thatcher's day. On both sides hopes for a fresh start have been soured by a feeling of betrayal.

The German chancellor was furious yesterday at British attempts to blame the Bundesbank for the pound's exit from the exchange-rate mechanism and saw this as scant reward for his efforts in helping negotiate the opt-out compromises for Britain at Maastricht. Mr Major and his colleagues are suspicious that France and Germany are again forcing the government's hand while plotting at their recent meeting in Paris a federalist agenda that will be sprung on Britain on or before the special Birmingham summit.

Herr Kohl has denied that Germany wants to push forward with a treaty of less than twelve. Such assurances do not ring true. Talk of a two-speed Europe was ripe for more than a year after he and President Mitterrand issued their 1990 manifesto for European union. It was clearly intended then to push the reluctant British into accepting the need for an intergovernmental conference. It is now an attempt to strike not only at Britain's amour propre but at Mr Major's handling of the EC presidency.

The German chancellor is in a dilemma. Brought up on the Rhineland borders of France and in the political tradition of Adenauer, he is convinced that his country will never find stability and political direction unless it is anchored in the European Community. European unity is, therefore, not only one of the few constants in his ideology but in his eyes a matter of vital self-interest to curb his country's potentially self-destructive wandering between East and West. For him, the Franco-German alliance is the keystone of this unity.

The French referendum came as a shock: not just because of the closeness of the result,

which cast doubt on his neighbour's commitment to this integration, but because of the overtly anti-German tone of the campaigning, both by the "yes" camp and the "no" camp. Herr Kohl's reaction has not been to pull away from an alliance that appears to be turning sour, however, but to double his efforts to refreshen it. The massive political and financial support for the embattled franc was the first immediate test: the chancellor's insistence that nothing should hold up Maastricht is the political pay-off he requires from Mitterrand.

The British calls for a rethink of EMU and for changes in the treaty are all the more frustrating to him: not just because Britain, a bigger country than Denmark, can still effectively kill the treaty, but because Britain is only voicing sentiments that he sees in France, fears which are growing in Germany — especially over EMU — and which he knows will make the decision to press ahead regardless almost impossible for European public opinion to swallow. He would happily be free of the British brake. But neither the German chancellor nor the French president have yet given any indication of how they will cut the cable.

For his part, Mr Major knows that the government cannot now press ahead until he has rebuilt a political consensus. The cabinet has edged a little this week towards the sensible view that Britain can move forward more slowly than its partners without undermining the national interest. But abandonment of ringing phrases like "remaining at the heart of Europe" risks a split in the Conservative party as great as that from a too hasty embrace of Maastricht.

Sir Leon's warning is that Britain, by resisting in the name of sovereignty closer integration under the Maastricht treaty, could end by losing even more sovereignty. This is a subtle way of placing in a British context the continental argument for going ahead with ratification. But barbed remarks this week both from Herr Kohl and from Theo Waigel, the German finance minister, are more likely to exacerbate the prickly state of Anglo-German relations than to stiffen the cabinet's resolve to ratify the treaty. Britain has been told often enough that it is in danger of missing the Euro-bus for this old canard to cause any fear.

ROMAN FACE LIFT

The Italian government is planning to spend £18 million over the next four years on restoring the Colosseum. It will raise the money itself rather than appeal for contributions from lovers of ancient monuments and the diaspora of the Roman Empire, which today comprises most of the world. This is a suitably grandiose price for that grandest and grimdest of historic buildings. If there is a touch of *folie de grandeur* about it, *folie* has been part of the structure of the Colosseum from its beginning 19 centuries ago, ever since it was erected in the valley where Nero excavated the artificial lake for his megalomaniac Domus Aurea.

The Italians do not intend to restore the Colosseum to its original use, though no doubt a capacity crowd of 50,000 could still be attracted every day to bat at blood sports between such unpopular contemporary gladiators as journalists and politicians, using such modern equivalents of trident and snicker-snee as handbag and television boom. They would certainly turn out for the stout modern *thrax* named Pavarotti or for Heavy Metal *provocatores*.

But countries live by the symbol as well as the balance of payments. Like others, Italy has trouble finding a role, a national identity, and even government, to suit the modern age. There is sound politics in refurbishing the paramount physical emblem of the time when Rome ruled the world. Others have done so before. The symbolism of Rome played a potent part in the rhetoric and imagery of the American, French and Fascist revolutions.

The Italians would be wise, however, to cease their restoration well before the Colosseum is returned to its pristine state. With the Great Pyramid of Cheops and Stonehenge, it has become one of the three great wonders of Ozymandias in the real world, inspiring thoughts of the transience of

mortal ambition as well as good books and paintings and bad films.

Its attractions are ruinous, and it appears best to modern sensibilities in the Piranesi mode, with the wild flowers growing out of the seats where the Roman crowd roared for blood, and now prowled by wild beasts no fiercer than a pack of urban cats. It became the apex of the Grand Tour because it declared to its visitors that, however mighty, to this favour must all empires come, and that in the shadow of this great ruin, individual heartaches and troubles were ashes under Tiber.

Each generation reconstructs the past from its own perspectives and to its own purposes. The travelling New Age mystics put ideologies into Stonehenge undreamed of by its mysterious builders. The Parthenon has been partly resurrected in the cold light of a northern Protestant sensibility, and would look to us ironically barbaric in its original Southern glitter of colour. Arthur Evans demonstrated the impossibility of putting Ozymandias together again with his gaudy reconstruction of the Minotaur palace at Knossos. It lacked the Piranesi touch as well as the Minotaur.

The Colosseum needs restoration, like the Parthenon and the medieval cathedrals of England, because of the damage caused by years of pollution created mainly by the modern Roman charioteer in his Fiat. It is right to restore the grim old heap because it has become one of the world's most powerful emblems, and because its final collapse would be as devastating culturally as the Fall of Rome was politically. It can also be made a highly lucrative attraction to the spectators of mass tourism. But the restoration must preserve the ambiguities of empire, like the slave who stood beside the triumphant general in his chariot, reminding him that even he was mortal.

ARTFUL ENTRY, ARTLESS EXIT

As long as the new cabinet minister for the arts refuses all invitations to sing or dance, he should serve John Major well. Peter Brooke is as firmly of the Tory old school as David Mellor is of the new. The next heritage secretary's recent attempt to become Speaker of the House of Commons reinforced his image as a man of fairness and moderation who could be guaranteed to find the centre of every argument.

Only a Dublin television rendition of Clementine, delivered at a time too close to an IRA atrocity against civilians in Northern Ireland, stained his career as Northern Ireland Secretary in Mr Major's pre-election administration. Yesterday, as was widely agreed in Westminster, he was the perfect answer for a prime minister who was wanting to make an appointment that would signify as little as possible.

Until Mr Major decides what view of Europe he really wants to take, he can perhaps be excused for avoiding signals that might be misunderstood. He had already allowed the politics of the new heritage ministry to impinge far too closely on the somewhat more central position of First Lord of the Treasury.

If, in the current circumstances, he had chosen a CD-collecting Thatcherite, the appointment would have been interpreted as delivering another rebuff to Chancellor Kohl. Had he chosen a theatre-loving

follower of Sir Edward Heath, there would have been howls from the cabinet's newly revived Eurosceptics. Playing safe was no bad way to play.

Mr Mellor tried to play safe himself yesterday, bowing out of the government in a mostly self-deprecating speech before fellow MPs who can always be relied upon to show sympathy at times such as these. He quoted Kipling on the power of the press and John Lennon on the serendipitous nature of life — an arts minister to the last.

But there could, it seemed, be no occasion involving David Mellor that did not include some measure of excess. To equate his treatment by newspaper editors with the sufferers under Ceausescu's rule of Romania was tasteless enough. To make jokes about Captain Oates and the icy wastes of the backbenches was also a tawdry trick of rhetoric from a man who, far from giving up his life for his friends, clung on to power despite all the damage that his friend the prime minister would thereby suffer.

Tact was never Mr Mellor's strength. He preferred endurance. At only 43 years of age, he must hope that his career is not over.

When a future prime minister is searching for a former minister to fill a sudden vacancy — looking perhaps for a man who will give just the right signal of bull-headedness and bluster — Mr Mellor may yet find himself back in the limelight he loves.

Mellor departure and moral issues

From Mr J. R. T. Rylance

Sir, There was a time in public life when those in high office whose behaviour or judgment had been found wanting or who had become an object of mirth instinctively knew that they had to resign.

There was a time, too, when those who had been forced to reverse a fundamental policy for which they had stood and for which they, as the minister in charge, and not the Cabinet bore responsibility, knew instinctively that it was time to go.

Leaders of this nation once recognised that the upholding of those tenets of public life was more important than loyalty to friends who had helped them to achieve that.

How can I teach my children high standards and that they must take responsibility for their actions if there is no example from those they are supposed to respect? What sort of leaders do we now have?

Yours faithfully,
J. R. T. RYLANCE,
Francis Taylor Building,
Temple, EC4.

September 24.

From Lord Hanson

Sir, It's a sad commentary on the state of the British media today when, with great relish at the top of the 6pm news, the BBC took 16 minutes, including John Cole's comments, to tell the David Mellor story in great detail.

One of the most important stories of the decade, the special economic debate in Parliament, took second place in the news with six minutes. What an insult to the viewers.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
HANSON,
House of Lords.
September 24.

From Mr Adrian Cosker

Sir, What a truly extraordinary coincidence it was that Mr Major's friend, David Mellor, should steal the headlines by choosing to resign on the very day of John Smith's debut in the Commons as Leader of the Opposition.

Yours faithfully,
ADRIAN COSKER,
92 Hampden Road,
Hitchin, Hertfordshire.
September 25.

From Mr Robin Grey, QC

Sir, Two of the country's "ambassadors" have recently been very much in the public eye: David Mellor and Paul Gascoigne ("Gaza" mania: Rome salutes its new hero", September 24).

Both work hard (when fit) and do excellent work for their country. Both have committed their indiscretions, as human beings are wont to do.

Why is one pilloried by the press with total disregard to the feelings of his wife and family, whilst the other is glorified? Is one so much better than the other?

Yours sincerely,
ROBIN GREY,
Queen Elizabeth Building,
Temple, EC4.

September 24.

Educational access

From Mr Jitinder Kohli

Sir, I must take issue with your interpretation of the Oxford Access Scheme (report and leading article, September 16). We are not in favour of reverse or positive discrimination, which would be unfair to all concerned and against the law.

What we are interested in is redressing a sociological elitism, one which your leader argues leads to Oxford being "the haven of middle-class children from well-off homes and public schools".

Our interest is in making Oxford an academic elite which is open regardless of sociological or educational background. Oxford must be an open as opposed to a closed elite.

This is the elitism which you rightly describe as "searching on the best from whatever background".

Yours faithfully,
JITINDER KOHLI
(Co-ordinator,
Oxford Access Scheme),
St Hugh's College,
Oxford.
September 16.

Water under London

From Sir Alan Muir Wood, FRS, FEng

Sir, I write to assure Gillian Tindall ("The flood beneath the capital's feet", Life & Times, September 15) that "a comprehensive network equivalent" to the Ordnance Survey for London's underworld has existed since its preparation in 1972 by my own firm, Sir William Halcrow and Partners, with the assistance of Mott, MacDonald, and Anderson (now Mott, Macdonald), in the form of a computer model.

The data included the main geological features, mostly acquired from boreholes during the previous century, and the positions of tunnels and deep utility services. So far as I am aware this was the first attempt at such mapping for any city.

The program yields graphical dis-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Facing up to legal and ethical dilemmas of euthanasia

From Dr Mary R. Davies

Sir, There must be few doctors who have reached retirement age, as I have, who can honestly say that they have never, by their actions, shortened a patient's life. In the vast majority of cases this would be the result of increased dosage of pain-relieving drugs to ease suffering, or of withholding medical treatment which would only prolong the process of dying.

This is acceptable in law. What of the rarer other cases? I, too, have cared for a dying patient whose pain was not controlled by increasingly large doses of heroin. Does society expect us to shut our compassion and leave the poor unfortunate to suffer? The fact that these cases are rare is no help to the victim.

There are those whose wish would be to prolong life for as long as medical science can do. There are those who believe that suffering is a refining fire for the soul and should be endured. I believe, however, that many would prefer the comfort of a compassionate person to relieve any suffering and ease their passage from life.

Is it right that those who have strongly held views should arbitrate for others who do not share these beliefs? Is it not time that an individual patient's clearly expressed wish, if consistent and witnessed, should be allowed in law as the guide for treatment in that terminal phase once death is inevitable?

Yours faithfully,
MARY R. DAVIES,
Old Hall,
Finistone Road,
Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire.
September 24.

From Mr Lewis Stretch

Sir, It is not the merciful, loving skill of the doctor from which the patient needs protection: it is persecution under the law.

Yours faithfully,
CICELY SAUNDERS (Chairman),
St Christopher's Hospice,
51-59 Lavie Park Road,
Sydenham, SE26.
September 24.

From Mr Michael W. Brown, JP

Sir, We have come to expect a lack of balance from partisans such as Ludovic Kennedy, who has called for a free pardon for Dr Cox (letter, September 22). Not content with this thought, he has amended the jury in the case.

As Bernard Levin points out today, the reality is complex. So far from being blameworthy, the jury is to be congratulated. We are all fortunate that there is still to be found a jury which will deliver a verdict in accordance with its oath (and hence with the evidence), regardless of personal reluctance, distaste or distress.

Such fortitude is the backbone of our criminal justice system, and is far more valuable than the occasional perverse or "protest" verdict.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL BROWN,
48 Knox Green,
Binfield, Berkshire.
September 22.

Paul and Christianity

From Mr Steve Turner

Sir, You report (September 23) the Council of Christians and Jews as publishing a study claiming that "St Paul did not think of himself as a Christian". My concordance shows that the word Christian(s) is found only three times in the Bible, twice with reference to Paul.

In Acts 11 we are told that the first people to be baptised as Christians were Greeks living in Antioch who had been taught by Paul.

In Acts 26 King Agrippa says that he has almost been persuaded to become a "Christian" after listening to Paul speak.

A Christian means a follower of Christ, "the anointed one". In this sense, whether or not St Paul ever uttered the phrase "I am a Christian", how else can we usefully describe a man who called himself "a servant of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:1) and an "apostle of Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1:1).

Yours faithfully,
STEVE TURNER,
7 Whitehall Park Road, W4.
September 23.

From Major R. D. Gould

Sir, Your report quotes the Rev Marcus Braybrooke as saying that it is unclear whether Jesus claimed to be the Messiah. His study apparently seeks to place orthodox Christianity on a better footing with its Jewish parent.

After his Damascus-road vision St Paul clearly saw (and wrote) that he had a different religious belief from

orthodox Judaism and hoped that all Jews would come to share his beliefs. Jesus's appreciation of his messianic task is repeatedly found in the gospels.

At the time of his incarnation only the Jewish people had any real understanding of God, and Jesus used that understanding as the foundation for his teaching of the full self-revelation of God. That is the Christian claim, which Judaism naturally rejects, for it is a definite alteration of the revealed faith as they understand it.

This does not, of course, prevent common action on social matters, nor theological discussion. The acceptance of this statement is not a denigration of either religion: the difference between the two cannot ever be a reason for anti-Semitism.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT GOULD,
5 Down, The Quadrangle,
Merton College, Blackheath, SE3.
September 24.

From Mr Paul Sayer

Sir, The gospels were written by eyewitnesses of the events and sayings recorded. The apostle Peter says:

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty (1 Peter 1:16).

In a court of law the testimony of two eyewitnesses would be accepted as being true, but apparently the Rev Marcus Braybrooke finds even four insufficient.

OBITUARIES

ALLEN PERCIVAL

Allen Dain Percival, CBE, principal of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, 1965-78, died in London on September 19 aged 67. He was born in Yorkshire on April 25, 1925.

"THE happiest GP in the world of music" was a description Allen Percival once gave himself. He also happened to have several specialisms in which he could more than hold his own. His achievements in music education were nourished by varied and wide experience as pianist, conductor, teacher, scholar, writer, editor and publisher. He drew from each skill to benefit his current preoccupation. From the beginning his acute ear and curiosity for all branches of music, his disregard for fashion, fuelled an unerring judgement.

While he was still a grammar school boy at Bradford he ran his own dance band and earned his first money in the local theatre pit. He also played the cinema organ. There was, too, the piano: he performed in public the concerti most popular at the time and explored the regular orchestral repertoire in piano duet arrangements. For Percival the division between popular and classical music did not exist.

During this period he was guided by a local teacher, John Brayshaw. A scholarship took him to Cambridge. Wartime naval service offered sporadic opportunities for conducting orchestras which he avidly seized. When peace returned, after a brief spell of work for the British Council in Paris, he took a job teaching piano at Haileybury School. Later he looked back on this with horror, except for a chance meeting that was to shape his future. Thurston Dart came to give a clavichord lecture-recital at the school's music club.

GROUP CAPTAIN WILLIAM PEARSON-ROGERS

Group Captain Henry William Pearson-Rogers, CBE, a pilot of the 1929-30 King's Flight with special responsibilities to the Prince of Wales, died aged 88 on August 17 after a car accident. He was born in Staffordshire on March 18, 1904.

BILL Pearson-Rogers entered the Royal Air Force with the sole idea of flying and with many aspiring airmen of the time his approach to the RAF's powerful bi-planes was initially a little too cavalier for comfort. His passing-out report at Cadet College, Cranwell, labelled him: "Apt to be foolhardy and too confi-



Weekend birthdays

TODAY: Miss Lucette Aldous, ballerina, 54; Mrs Margaret Bryan, diplomat, 63; Lady (Hugh) Cason, architect and designer, 74; Mr Ian Chappell, cricketer, 49; Mr Neil Coles, golfer, 58; Mr Peter Dews, theatre and television director, 63; Mr Bryan Ferry, rock singer, 47; Sir Alan Gurney, former MP, 74; Lord Griffiths, Air Commodore Sir Harold, former master-in-chief, RAFAFNS, 66; Sir James Hennessy, diplomat, 69; Professor Louise Johnson, bio-physicist, 52; Mr P.T. Lewis, chairman, John Lewis Partnership, 68.

St Ronald McIntosh, former chairman, APV, 73; Mr G.W. Musick, former chairman, Mobil Oil Company, 72; Marshal of the RAF Sir Denis Swoodson, 76; Miss Margaret Thomas, painter, 76; Mr V.H. Watson, chairman, John Waddington, 64.

TOMORROW: Miss Dianne Abbott, MP, 39; Miss Joanne Barstow, opera singer, 52; Sir Roger Birch, chief constable, Sussex, 62; Mr Philip Blacker, jockey, 43; Baroness Blackstone, 50; the Earl of Clanwilliam, 73; Miss Barbara Dickson, singer, 44; Mr J.K. Gill, former president, Saachi and Saachi, 72; Sir Alexander Graham, Lord Mayor of London, 54; Mr Nicholas Haslam, interior designer, 53; Sir Peter Holmes, chairman, Shell Transport and Trading Company, 60; Mr Gordon Honeycombe, broadcaster and author, 82; Lt. General Sir Ian Jacob, 93; Mr Denis Lawton, actor, 45; Mr Donald Lindsay, former headmaster, Merton College, 82; Professor G.H. Martin, former Keeper of Public Records, 64; the Rev Professor D.E. Nineham, theologian, 71; Mr D.A.E.R. Peake, chairman, Kleinwort Benson Group, 58; General Sir Ian Riches, 84; Dr Margaret Rule, director of research and interpretation, Mary Rose Trust, 64; Lord Shepherd,



Dart organised Percival's return to Cambridge, first as an administrator in the music faculty and afterwards as director of music at Homerton. Through supervising undergraduates he discovered for the first time a love of teaching. Cambridge also offered a wide range of opportunities

for conducting: college choirs and orchestras, the Cambridge Opera Company and CUMS. These dual activities proved to him that learning and performance must go hand in hand, that the most profound understanding of music comes from the practising of it.

In 1962 Gordon Thorne, principal of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, created the new post of director of music studies. He gave Percival the job and with it *carte blanche* to devise the future graduate and associate courses. These came to reflect Percival's imagination and also his pragmatic appraisal of prospects in the musical profession. When Gordon Thorne died in 1965 Percival was the natural successor.

In 1952 he married Rachel Hay, a former dancer who for 10 years was writer and presenter of *Music and Movement*, a regular part of BBC Radio's programme for schools. Together they took the closest interest in every event and every person, staff or student, at the Guildhall. Percival's extraordinarily accurate memory of each individual remained clear to the very end of his life.

In defence of his beliefs he showed a strength of will and tenacity that was formidable. Without it many of his innovations would not have gone through. He raised the status of the drama department, with Celia Bonyai laid the foundations for the future Early Music Course, championed the yearly summer productions of opera, often Mozart, for which the Percivals would provide their own translations.

Supervising the plans for the move from the school's premises in John Carpenter Street to the Barbican fired his imagination. But the multiple detail to be attended to outstretched his stamina and took its toll on his health and energy. Once the school was established in the new premises he was happy for a successor to take over, provided that the spirit of the Guildhall took root in the new ground. It did.

Percival's association with the publishers Stainer & Bell as a director covered more than 30 years: he was

executive chairman from 1978 to 1990. He worked closely with Thurston Dart on the scholarly editions with which Stainer & Bell have been associated, including the *Early Keyboard* series and seeing through the press the editions of *Music Britannica* and *Early English Church Music*. In 1972 he played a major role in assuring the continuation of Stainer & Bell as an independent publishing house.

In 1987 his wife Rachel died of cancer. Their partnership had been indivisible. Under the patronage of John Hosier he accepted the directorship of the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts as "caretaker" for a year before Hosier himself took over. On his return to London there was the first manifestation of the illness to which he was to succumb four years later. Percival was helped through it by a childhood friend, Margaret Pickett, who was now head of Music Therapy at the Guildhall. In 1990 he and Margaret were married.

He regained the strength to pursue the various charitable activities to which he was committed. Notable among these was the Musicians' Benevolent Fund, an association in which he had served as early as 1972. In 1987 he was elected deputy chairman. Here the breadth of his experience, his humanity and meticulous command of administrative detail were invaluable. When he died he was on the point of enjoying his inauguration as the Master Elect of the Worshipful Company of Musicians.

Allen Percival was a kindly, social, gregarious man, a *bon vivant* with a life-long love for travel, well acquainted with the good restaurants in Paris and pubs in Britain. He was a man of laughter and wit but without malice; his love of music as warm as his love of people.

MOHAMMED HIDAYATULLAH

Justice Mohammed Hidayatullah, former Vice-President and Chief Justice of India, died in Bombay on September 18 aged 86. He was born in Bemli, Madhya Pradesh, India, on December 17, 1905.

INDIA was lucky to have leadership by people like Gokhale, Gandhi and Nehru, who passionately believed in human freedom, social justice and the rule of law. They took enormous pride in Indian traditions and culture.

Sadly that generation has now gone. Justice Mohammed Hidayatullah, India's former vice-president and chief justice, who died of a massive heart attack, was among the most accomplished men of the succeeding one. The grand old man of India's judiciary was the voice of sanity in a country where hardening political and religious attitudes are throwing problems which could potentially tear apart the fabric of the secular Indian democracy.

When India was partitioned in 1947 Hidayatullah was noted as being the youngest and the brightest judge at Nagpur high court. Some of his senior Muslim colleagues migrating to Pakistan, advised him to look for a brighter future in the newly-created Islamic state. But Hidayatullah decided to stay in a Hindu-dominated India.

In 1954 he became the youngest chief justice of Madhya Pradesh high court and two years later he was to become the youngest judge of the Supreme Court of India. After 10 years of distinguished service he realised his ultimate ambition: he became chief justice of India.

In 1979 he was unanimously elected as the vice-president of India by both houses of the Indian parliament. His election was a tribute to his fearless impartiality. In 1969 and also in 1982 he twice served as the acting president of India for a short period.

After early schooling in India, Hidayatullah was sent to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he fancied Marxism and mixed with leftist intellectuals, including Burgess and Blunt. He was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1930.

His summations back in India were a model of precision and clarity, going to the heart of the issue at stake. Of his many judgments the most famous was on Colaknath's case in which the Supreme Court ruled that parliament in India had no power to abridge individual fundamental rights as described in the Indian Constitution. His moderate and humane approach to the spirit of the law could not be construed as weakness, neither could his politeness and soft mannerisms.

And there was a harsher

side. He favoured the death penalty and once supported the idea of public flogging for "eve teasing", an unduly romantic description for the incessant harassment of women in India's crowded trains, buses and bazaars. He was equally stern on food adulteration, an endemic crime which takes thousands of innocent lives every year in India.

Justice Hidayatullah was a courageous man who once, as chief justice, overpowered in a crowded courtroom a knife-wielding assailant who had attacked one of his fellow judges. In May 1948 when in a partitioned sub-continent Hindus and Muslims were still killing each other he married a Hindu, Pushpa Shah and, respecting her



faith, refused to convert her to Islam.

His autobiography *My Own Boswell* is sprinkled with his wit. One anecdote concerns Richard Nixon. In 1969 the publicly-obsessed US President landed at New Delhi airport and ceaselessly waved to the US press and cameramen nearly forgetting that Justice Hidayatullah, then acting president of India, was waiting to greet him.

Seeing large crowds on the way to the president's palace Nixon naively asked Hidayatullah: "Do they always greet you like this or have they come to greet me?" Hidayatullah quipped: "Mr President I would not know but I do suspect that many of these youngsters are here to see what a bullet-proof car looks like."

In fact, President Nixon had brought his own bullet-proof limousine, something Indians had never seen before and many were naturally more interested in this huge limousine than the president.

Appointed OBE in 1956, Justice Hidayatullah valued Britain's contribution to the growth of democracy in India. In an interview with the BBC World Service he once said the British "have left a tradition of the independence of judiciary... that is the greatest contribution that Britain has made to the advancement of the judiciary of India".

SEPT 26 ON THIS DAY 1803

The ill-fated attempt by Robert Emmet (1778-1803) to capture Dublin Castle may be a minor engagement in Ireland's struggle for independence, but his stirring speech at his trial has inspired generations of nationalists: it concluded: "When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then... let my epitaph be written: I have done".

The Rev Canon David Shires, Vicar, St Michael and All Angels, Blackheath Park (Southwark); to retire as from 31 March 1993.

The Rev Christopher Horsemann, Curate in the Weston-super-Mare Central Parish Team Ministry; to be Team Vicar in the Yatton Moor Team Ministry (Bath and Wells).

The Rev Marda Frampton, Assistant Curate of Burford with Fullbrook and Tapton to be Assistant Curate in the Witney Team Ministry (Oxford).

The Rev Christopher Horsemann, Curate in the Weston-super-Mare Central Parish Team Ministry; to be Team Vicar in the Yatton Moor Team Ministry (Bath and Wells).

The Rev Graham Johnson, Team Rector, Daveny and Whitsbury; to be Priest in Charge of Loddington and Warden of Launde Abbey (Leicestershire).

The Rev Alison Leigh, Deacon, Green Street Green; to be Deacon in Charge of East Peckham and Newstead (Rochester).

The Rev Stafford Low, Curate, Glastonbury St John the Baptist and St Benedict, Meare, West Pernard and Godney; to be Rector of Berrington and Brean (Bath and Wells).

The Rev Canon Basil Trevor-Morgan, Vicar, Christchurch (Worcester); to retire as from 31 December.

The Rev Geoffrey Sowerby, Vicar, Hawes w/ Hardraw (Ripon); retired as from 11 August 1992.

The Rev Winifred Thomson, Deacon, Oadby Team Ministry (Leicester); to retire as from 31 December.

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County Hall comes back to life as a Japanese hotel

By DOUGLAS BROOM,
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CORRESPONDENT

COUNTY Hall, the home of London local government for 64 years, is to become a Japanese-run hotel after the government's decision yesterday to reject a bid for the building from the London School of Economics.

The council chamber where "Red" Ken Livingstone once rallied against Margaret Thatcher and all her works will become a business conference centre, and offices occupied by generations of London leaders will be converted into luxury suites.

Opened in 1922 by King George V, County Hall was home first to the London County Council, then the Greater London Council and after its demise in 1986 it housed the Inner London Education Authority until it, too, was abolished in 1990.

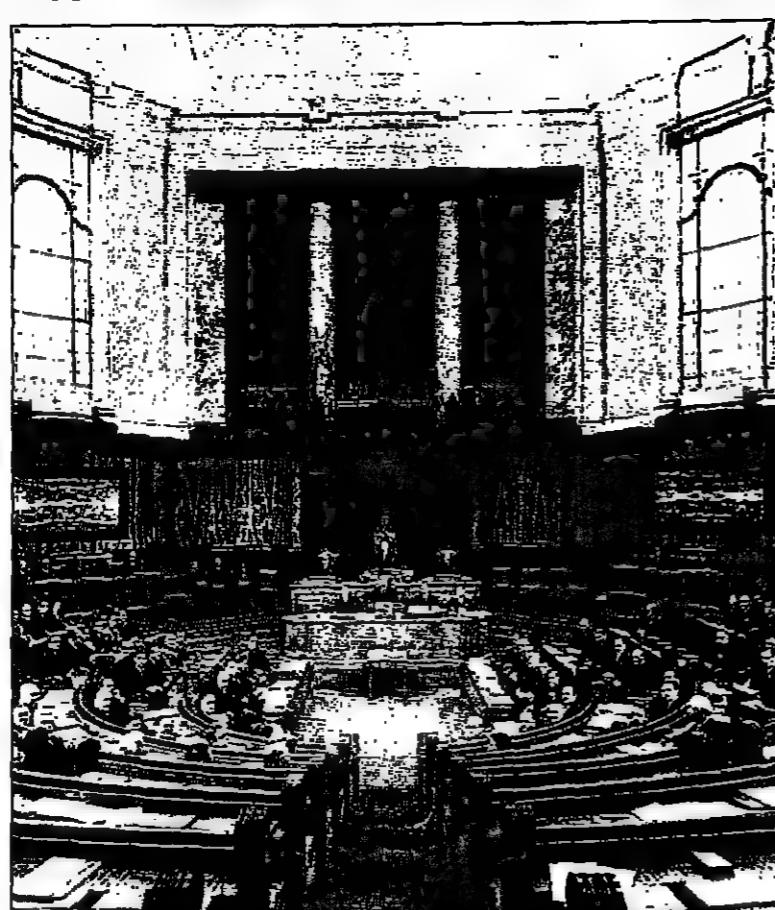
Michael Howard, the environment secretary, said yesterday that he had withdrawn a formal direction forbidding the London Residuary Body from selling the Grade II listed building to the Japanese leisure group, Shirayama. The £60 million sale, agreed in March, was halted after the LSE said it wanted to submit a bid to buy County Hall for its new headquarters. Mr Howard said yesterday that the LSE's £65 million bid was unacceptable.

In a Commons written answer, Mr Howard said that an investigation of the LSE bid by the Universities Funding Council had shown that it would have involved "a significant and unacceptable call on public funds".

A report prepared by accountants Touche Ross for the funding council showed that



City pride: the former home of the Greater London Council is to be turned into a 567-bedroom hotel, retaining all the listed internal features



The council chamber, photographed in 1938, will host conferences

while the LSE claimed it could sell its present site at Houghton Street, Aldwych, for £100 million the true value of the site was between £25 million and £38 million. The funding council refused to endorse the LSE bid.

As soon as the decision was announced, Sir Godfrey Taylor, the residuary body's chairman, said it was "a welcome opt-out clause in the contract with Shirayama which would have allowed it to withdraw from the deal. Sir Godfrey,

who complained that the fate of County Hall had been taken out of his hands when Mr Howard stepped in to halt the sale in July, said that he was delighted that "this exciting project" could go ahead.

Makoto Toyota, Shirayama's London representative, said Mr Howard's decision was "a great relief". He called on Londoners to give the hotel project their full support and said that his company was determined that County Hall would remain

"one of the most important historical buildings in London and Europe". The four-star, 567-bedroom hotel, would retain all the listed internal features, including the oak-panelled members' suite on the first floor.



Sierra Leone chiefs watching ambulance controllers at work in 1950



Corridors of power that will become home to room service waiters

Political sketch

Sniggering MPs denied their fun

The fun — Mr Mellor: A Personal Statement — was scheduled for 11am: a civilised time for a lynching. Early-bird MPs arrived earlier to join the foreign secretary in a coffee-and-croissants tour of a collapsing world. It was the House at its worst, opining gravely on subjects over which it has no control.

Yugoslavia, Iraq... plausible as ever, Hurd might as well have been describing Mars. "Complex", "delicate negotiations", "not a lot we can do" — the thought occurs that he could be utterly wrong, and there would be no way of telling. "Why don't you do something?" exploded Labour's Barry Sheerman.

Do? Mr Hurd gave a little shudder. Unfortunately, the ministerial microphones have been turned up and the power-surge wrecked sound-definition.

Meaning to speak of the thousands of Britons in dangerous foreign places, Mr Hurd appears to remark on the importance, for British diplomacy, "of thousands of breakfasts in Yugoslavia, the Middle East and Mogadishu". Quite.

"Having become heartily sick of my private life myself," he said. "I cannot expect others to take a more charitable view." It was an eccentric statement, by degrees chatty, defiant, funny, menacing and bitter: but devoid of self-pity. His colleagues had come to reward a show of regret. But of regret there was little, so sympathy was tinged with bemusement.

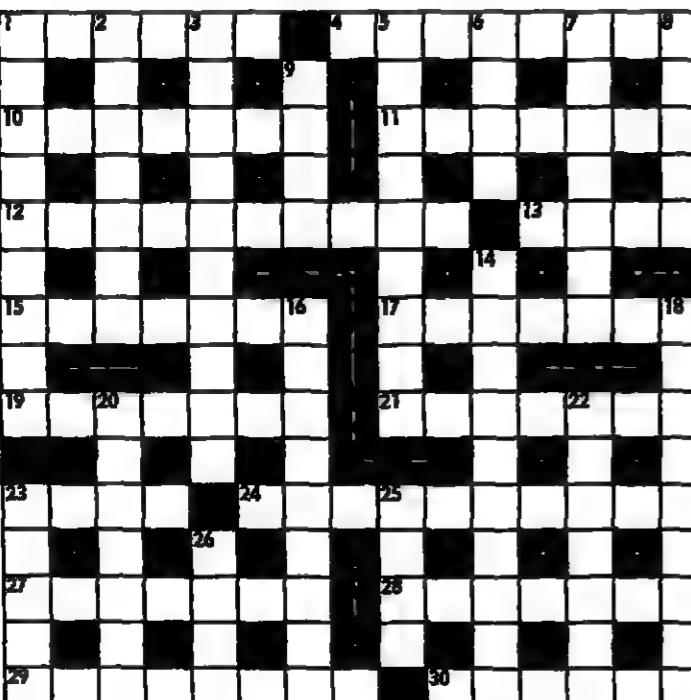
A fortnight of total cock-up ended yesterday with just one resignation: a man agreed on all sides to be good at his job.

MATTHEW PARRIS

profile

Furt
loss
week

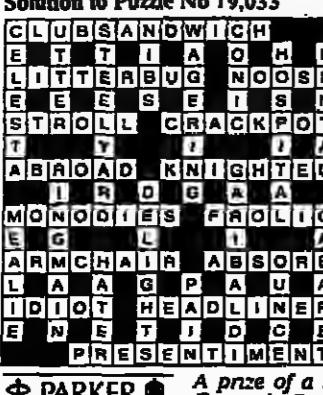
THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 19,034



ACROSS

- 1 Points in motor-vehicles touch lightly (6).
- 4 As judge, I am put centrally in place (8).
- 10 Heron is flying near the beach (7).
- 11 Soames Forsyte's daughter embraces an idler (7).
- 12 Material of a Norfolk jacket? (10).
- 13 See the gathering? (4).
- 15 Champion philanthropist helped to create records? (7).
- 17 What arresting strippers they were! (7).
- 19 Tobacco tars condensed? (4-3).
- 21 Brunel originally accepted a hypothesis of this sort (7).
- 23 Spare husband? (4).
- 24 Not much of a round! (10).
- 27 A record salesman (retired) takes a walk in the garden (7).
- 28 Put one foot in the water in Ely, for example? (7).
- 29 Indifferent approach leads to date to meet? (8).
- 30 Bird so excited by quarry? (6).
- DOWN
- 1 Chap on foot, Bill, in trouble in links (9).
- 2 Put back foreign currency after a holiday? (7).
- 3 Steps taken to avoid pieces of fencing? (5-5).
- 5 Peter workin in office that is guarded when closed (6-3).

Solution to Puzzle No 19,033



PARKER DUOFOLD A prize of a superb Parker Duofold International Fountain Pen, with an 18 carat gold nib and fully guaranteed for the lifetime of the original owner will be given for the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The winners and solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

NIEVIE-NICK
a. The old debtors' prison in Edinburgh
b. A sword-stick
c. A children's guessing game

QUIDDLE

a. A pound coin
b. A fastidious person
c. To fish for trout by hand

RICKLE

a. A small Lake District stream
b. To tease or mob up
c. To rattle

SCOBBERLITCHER

a. A cobbler's assistant
b. An older
c. An unweaned puppy or whelp

Answers on page 18

AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic and roadworks information, 24 hours a day, dial 0836 401 followed by the appropriate code.

London & SE traffic, roadworks
C. London (within N & S Circs)..... 731
M-ways/roads M4-M1..... 732
M-ways/roads M1-Dartford T..... 733
M-ways/roads M25-M25..... 734
M-ways/roads M25-M4..... 735
M25 London Orbital only..... 736

National traffic and roundabouts

National motorways..... 737

West Country..... 738

Wales..... 739

Midlands..... 740

East Anglia..... 741

North-West England..... 742

North-East England..... 743

Scotland..... 744

Northern Ireland..... 745

AA Roadwatch is charged at 36p per minute (cheap rate) and 48p per minute at all other times.

AA Transfer funds illegally from Arundel (7).

23 Being agreeable, I would follow Simple Simon (5).

24 A capital orchestra into the bargain (4).

26 Combed wool of animal upside down (4).

The winners of last Saturday's competition are: M. E. K. Davies, Allum Lane, Ellesmere, Herefordshire; J. E. Hall, Bowland Court, Wardle Road, Sale, Cheshire; P. P. Hargreaves, Westray Drive, Hinckley, Leicestershire; N. S. Jones, St Martins Avenue, Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh; D. Murdoch, The Manse, Dublin Road, Omagh, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland.

Concise Crossword, page 16
Weekend Times section

Solution to Puzzle No 19,028

BASISOONIST GOES

MONOIES FROLIC

ARMCHAIR ABSORB

IDIOT HEADLINER

PRESENTIMENT DIRE GRENADIERS

PARKER DUOFOLD A prize of a superb Parker Duofold International Fountain Pen, with an 18 carat gold nib and fully guaranteed for the lifetime of the original owner will be given for the first five correct solutions opened next

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Mowlem payout trimmed after loss

By MICHAEL TATE, CITY EDITOR

THREE factors combined to thrust John Mowlem, the construction group, deep into the red in the first half of 1992.

They were: a £3 million provision against work at Canary Wharf that has not been paid for, a £2.5 million loss on London City Airport and an almost trebled interest charge.

Sir Philip Beck, the chairman, reported pre-tax losses of £9.9 million for the six months to June 30, against a £7 million profit a year ago. The company is not axing its interim dividend altogether, but cutting it from 5.65p to 2p. "The underlying financial position justifies the payment from reserves," Sir Philip said.

The sale of the American scaffolding business will bring in \$30 million in the second half — although closure of the Canadian business will mean a \$4.3 million extraordinary charge to the profit and loss account.

Together with strong cash flows from housing and the discontinued property development business that will ensure that borrowings remain around last December's £60 million level.

Sir Philip also hopes to bring in a partner at London City Airport. The losses of which are no longer covered by earlier provisions. It looks as if the airport is unlikely to

contribute a profit before 1994, and Sir Philip said there had been "more than a dozen" expressions of interest in a partnership deal. "But we would not want to relinquish control," he added.

He said the airport needed 400,000 passengers to break even. "We are currently seeing perhaps 250,000, but we hope to have between 350,000 and 400,000 by the end of the next year."

Capacity is put at almost 2 million. From October, seven airlines will be operating out of London City, with Zurich, Lugano, Stockholm and Berlin added to destinations. Other routes are expected to be added by next spring.

All Mowlem's main UK businesses — construction, housing, scaffolding and equipment hire — made operating profits, although only scaffolding avoided a setback.

Contracting, for which the group has made an exceptional provision in connection with Canary Wharf, now in administration, has seen a levelling out in order intake, Sir Philip said.

Group interest charges leapt from £1.9 million to £5.1 million, reflecting the short-term, mid-year rise in borrowings and the decline in British interest rates, which cost the group £1 million in income receivable on sterling deposits.



Looking for a partner at London City airport: Sir Philip Beck, the chairman

Wembley ahead at half time

SIR Brian Wolfson, chairman of Wembley, appeared to have scored an own goal when his sharp cut in the interim dividend sent the share price crashing 7p to 18p. By the final whistle, however, the shares had rallied to 21p (Michael Tate writes).

Sir Brian despaired of the stock market. "What do we have to do? We have had a rights issue, we have sold the Guild business, and we have got the group back into profit. All that has happened is that

in an environment that stinks, we have taken a sensible view over the dividend."

Shareholders will collect only 0.2p a share this time round, against 0.9p previously, but Sir Brian promises to review the position for the year as a whole. At half-time, the shares had rallied to 21p (Michael Tate writes).

The Wembley complex is

cost-cutting programme, and with a Rugby Union international — its first ever — and the Rugby League Cup final scheduled for the autumn, the second half looks promising.

American trading suffered from a downturn in betting at greyhound tracks and increased casino competition. Net proceeds of £15 million from the sale of Guild Entertainment have been used to reduce debt, now down to £120 million, or 60 per cent of shareholders' funds.

Airbreak Leisure's licence revoked

By HARVEY ELLIOTT
TRAVEL CORRESPONDENT

PLANS were being drawn up last night to bring home thousands of holidaymakers after the Civil Aviation Authority called in the "insurance" bonds of four travel companies. The bonds total almost £4 million.

Airbreak Leisure Group — consisting of Airbreak Aviation, Next Island, Peter Pan and Sunstar Tours — was placed in administration and had its licence revoked. The group, which sent more than 100,000 package tourists to Mediterranean destinations, announced losses of £2.92 million in the first six months of this year.

The chairman and the finance director resigned and talks began with Cyprus-based Champion Holdings over a re-financing package. These have so far come to nothing, however.

Holidaymakers already in their resorts will be able to finish their holidays before being brought back by another company or on aircraft chartered by the CAA. Thousands more who hold bookings will have the choice of going ahead or getting their money back.

Airbreak Leisure was floated on the Unlisted Securities Market and last year made a profit of £1.6 million. At the beginning of this year, it acquired Sunsail International, a yachting charter company.

Last night, the directors of Sunsail said that, as Sunsail had a separate licence, the company would continue trading normally.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Clayform falls deeper in the red at half time

CLAYFORM Properties, with activities embracing property, the Stead & Simpson shoe chain and a 77 per cent stake in Dunlop, the Irish property company, reported a £10.9 million pre-tax loss for the six months to June 30, compared with a £6.6 million loss last time. There is again no dividend. The company said the economic outlook remained uncertain, despite this week's interest rate cut.

Retailing interests that made operating profits of £2.3 million in the first half of 1991 turned in a £1.1 million operating loss, and operating income from property investment eased from £2.6 million to £1.1 million. Debt has been cut from £58 million at the last year end to £43 million. Michael Wigley, chairman, said he hoped the government would now introduce measures to revive the economy.

Tate increases stake

TATE and Lyle, the sugar producer, has acquired a further 23 per cent of Alcantara-Sociedade de Empreendimentos Agrícolas for about £4 million from Banco Espírito Santo Comercial de Lisboa. Its stake in the Portuguese cane sugar refiner is now 97 per cent and it plans to mop up the rest. Neil Shaw, Tate & Lyle chairman, said Alcantara had made a valuable contribution to the group since a stake was first acquired in 1984. It would continue to be managed by the same Portuguese team and executive board directors.

Fortnum & Mason dips

FORTNUM & Mason, the Piccadilly department store, saw pre-tax profits dip to £2.15 million (£2.16 million) in the year to July 11. Trading profits declined by £53,000 to £1.4 million, but the fall was balanced by receivable interest of £741,000, up £51,000. Sales were down by between 1.5 and 2 per cent. The company has changed its year end and the above figures take the 52 weeks to July 11 to enable comparison. Earnings per share were 383p (34p). A third interim dividend of 12p makes 108p (90p) for the year.

Tepnel to join USM

TEPNEL Diagnostics, the biotechnology group, is to join the Unlisted Securities Market via a £5.16 million placing which places a value of £27.5 million on the company. Dealings are expected to begin on next Wednesday. Tepnel is based at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology and makes diagnostic tests for monitoring antibiotic contamination in food and viruses and bacteria in blood. The antibiotic test has been designed to meet increased concern over antibiotic contamination and to match EC demands.

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Results for the year to 31st July 1992*

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Earnings: Increased by 3% to 37.2p per stock unit
Dividend: Raised by 4.3% to 36.5p per stock unit
Expenses: Less than 0.2% of total assets
No expenses are charged to capital

ASSETS

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FTA All-Share Index down 7.5%

Total Assets: £2.7m

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Central and HTV turn up the contrast

THE benefits and drawbacks of a free market, after the franchise handover in January, were never so clear than in the contrasting figures and fortunes of Central Independent Television, one of the big guns of the industry, and the much tamer HTV Group, which operates the old Hamlet TV franchise.

Central motored ahead with an extraordinary rise in pre-tax profits from £3.4 million in the six months to end-June and is lifting the interim dividend from 7.5p to 10p. Interim losses at HTV for the same period deepened from £4.34 million to £5.03 million, and the group is forced to forgo the interim dividend entirely.

The market, not expecting quite such a windfall from Central, sent the shares ahead 70p to 614.45 on the news, while HTV, whose chairman is Louis Sherwood, collapsed 14p to 27p. At the heart of the contrasting performances was the movement of advertising revenue, in times of economic difficulty, from the regions and into the centre — into Central, the South East franchise holders and Scottish TV, another strong contender in the next franchise period. Central also has the benefit of its efficient sales house, TSMS, jointly owned by Anglia and by Anglia.

So Central's share of the country's revenue grew from 14.04 per cent to 14.83 per cent, while HTV's shrank from 6.2 per cent to 5.8 per cent. Central is pushing hard to have the rules on takeovers relaxed and clearly has its eye on Anglia TV next door; it is currently precluded under Independent Television Commission rules from taking over either Anglia or HTV, both classed as among the larger franchise-holders.



Feeling the pinch: Louis Sherwood, HTV chairman

David Grimbley, at Hoare Govett, expects about £40 million pre-tax from Central this year. His forecast also puts the company on about 14 times 1993 earnings once the new franchise system gets started, a fair rating and about in line with other leaders of the sector, such as LWT and Scottish.

HTV will probably lose money this year, although the company hopes continuing deep cost cuts and the change in rules on Channel 4 funding will produce a profit in 1993, despite the need to find £20.5 million under the new levy.

system. A bid looks a forlorn hope, given the company's high debts.

Molins

MOLINS, the tobacco and packaging machinery maker, seems to be promising lots of jam tomorrow — but at least the group appears to be quite capable of delivering.

The group managed pre-tax profits of £1.2 million in the six months ended June, against £1.8 million previously, and hints that the second half will be even stronger. Trading margins within the

tobacco machinery division advanced from 11.9 per cent to 13.8 per cent, and further productivity gains are likely.

Because the sun never sets on the smoking nations of the world, the weakness in the domestic American tobacco market was more than compensated for by stronger international markets.

There is light at the end of the long legal tunnel concerning litigation over patents, and the first (though modest) credit is expected in the second half. And once the question of Molins' pension fund surpluses has been resolved, the group should be able to further its borrowings and thus tackle acquisitions.

The group's preference for dealing with the indicated £38 million prescribed pension surpluses (as at January 1) is to put cash back into the business rather than to make a special distribution.

But now that Leucadia, and its 48.4 per cent stake, is something of the past — the stake was spread among institutions last November, to Molins' delight — management has been able to get on with the "desk work" necessary for the further development of its business.

Lower American interest rates and an improved borrowing position saw the interim net interest charge ease from £1.8 million to £1.5 million, and recognition of the disparity between interim and final dividends sees the 1992 interim rise from 3p to 4.5p. Year-end pre-tax profits could rise by £1 million to £16.5 million to put the shares at 319p, up 18p, on 8.2 times 1992 profits, backed by a prospective 5.9 per cent yield.

Stick with Molins. Jam is coming.

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100%	75%	Trust 6% 1994	100	-1		

BUSINESS PROFILE: Alan Bowkett

Fiery puritan at the wheel of a Bentley

The head of Berisford is not afraid to risk his own money in the company he runs, Carol Leonard discovered

In an era when company directors are constantly criticised for being overpaid or for owning insufficient shares in the companies they run, Alan Bowkett is an exception.

Mr Bowkett, chief executive since January of what remains of the once controversial property and commodity group S&W Berisford — now known simply as Berisford — draws a respectable salary of £250,000 a year, but has also invested more than £1 million of his own money in the business.

The differences between Bowkett and the profiles of most other public company chief executives do not, however, end there. At 41 years of age he is younger, slightly plumper — he once rowed and played rugby but now states definitely that he takes no exercise — and, perhaps because he has so much of his own cash riding on Berisford's future success, he has been quicker than most to take unpleasant remedial action.

After just eight months in the job, staff in the London office have been cut from 117 to 33 — "We have come down from four floors to one," says

Bowkett — the company's property portfolio has been all liquidated — "I had to take the decision to liquidate businesses I did not want" — and although he is not yet ready to declare his hand, he hints that he may have identified a significant business — "perhaps we will be ready to do something by the end of this year" — to buy.

"Up until about six weeks ago I had spent 95 per cent of my time on housekeeping," Bowkett says. When he arrived at Berisford he found "a lot of people running around being very active but not being very effective or decisive". At first he was, he says, "prejudiced against them, but then I discovered that they were in fact very competent just perhaps misdirected". The internal restructuring of Berisford has, nevertheless, taken longer than he had planned. "I would be the first to admit that the housekeeping has been more difficult than I had anticipated, largely

"You know you are not going to get away with anything, no matter how close you think you are"

because what had expected to happen in the UK market did not work out. I assumed that after the election there would be a general improvement in confidence and therefore recovery, but I got it completely wrong."

As he speaks, Bowkett, in shirt sleeves and a Giorgio Armani tie, leans back in his chair, crosses his legs and stretches his arms out behind him, bringing his hands to rest on top of his head. He is in no sense nervous, shy or inhibited. He reaches forward periodically to help himself to a sandwich from a communal plate, absent-mindedly picking up stray pieces of sweetcorn from the table and popping them into his mouth. His eyes are unusual in that they are a particularly pale shade of blue, his hair is thick and, although grey, he looks, if anything, younger than his years.

"In the 1980s you could go in and turn around a company in 12 months," he continues. "Now you have to think in terms of a decade of real, sustained and fundamental improvement. The 1990s are vastly different to the 1980s. It's something I feel quite strongly about.

You are comparing a period of high inflation with one of low inflation. In the 1980s it was quite easy to take a tired old manufacturing company and rationalise it. You could hide a multitude of sins by just pushing prices up, and in

an inflationary environment you could get away with it. In the 1990s, with low inflation, fiddling prices will be impossible and companies will be forced to focus on real quality and real marketing. The gestation periods will be longer and banks will be less amenable to debt financing. That means that the real issue for everybody in the 1990s, be they businesses or governments, is going to be access to capital."

Bowkett certainly has plenty of capital, both corporately and privately. Berisford has net assets worth £100 million — £35 million of them tied up in Californian seed businesses — and Bowkett is reputed to have personally made £40 million by being part of the



The gods smile down: Alan Bowkett, who took four years longer than planned to become a millionaire, with his wife Joy

management team that bought into the ball bearings subsidiary of RHP for £71.5 million, and then sold out two years later to NSK, the Japanese manufacturer, for more than £400 million.

His office at Berisford is, nevertheless, spartan, with no pictures, venetian blinds instead of curtains and functional furniture. Bowkett insists, however, that he has learnt how to spend money. His wife Joy and their four children — Alexandra, 12, Camilla, 10, Rupert, eight, and Hugo, six — divide their time between houses in Belgravia, Norfolk — a seven-bedroom Georgian farmhouse — and Tuscany. Bowkett has two cars for his own use, a Bentley Turbo and a Mercedes sports.

According to friends, the Bentley was part of his original game plan and some of them express surprise at the obvious pleasure Bowkett experiences when pedestrians and motorists turn and stare. "You do think differently when you have lots of money," he says. "It brings security and choices. You face adversity better because you don't have to worry if the Access and

electricity bills arrive at the same time."

Given that he is so extrovert and up-front, and that he came from a working-class background, Bowkett's open enjoyment of his achievements should perhaps not be so surprising after all. Born into a staunchly Labour household in Bilshorpe, Nottinghamshire, the eldest of two sons, his father was for a time a miner — "he absolutely loathed it" — and then he ran a garage services business in Worcestershire. Home was a prefabricated house and Bowkett — a Labour supporter in his university days, a Conservative councillor in Ealing from 1978-82 — went to the local grammar school.

"I was bright but not the brightest," recalls Bowkett. "I was London [UCL] not Oxbridge and I was always one of the boys, instigating rather than following."

Both his parents are still alive and he is, he says, similar in character to his father. "I'm very much a man's man in that he is strong and tough and you always know where you stand with him. You can have a flaming row one minute but no grudges are borne and the next minute you can be

sharing a pint." Hammond summarises the unforgiving side of Bowkett's nature by describing it as being "his Methodist upbringing" and says that he also has a puritanical attitude towards sex.

"He is a very solid family man," His head, Hammond says, never turns to look at a pretty woman and he does not participate in bar-room talk about sexual fantasies. "Normally men like to talk about things like power, status, money or whatever. Apart from flippant remarks like I need to do something because I'm too young to retire, I think a desire for status and recognition now drives me, but not so much power."

Hammond also points out that perhaps the unforgiving streak is a reaction to Bowkett's tendency to be, if anything, too trusting. It is a means of protecting himself from a facet of his personality that would otherwise leave him exposed and vulnerable. "If he weighs you up as being a person he could trust, he would tell you almost anything, almost to a fault," says Hammond.

That threat of seclusion from Bowkett's inner sanctum, of being severed from any form of friendship with him by a portentous-like mental divide, is compounded by

his slightly threatening presence, perhaps caused by a hint of that potentially fiery temper. "He does have tremendous presence," says Hammond, "and you know you are not going to get away with anything, no matter how close you think you are to him. At times he even scares me, because of his unblinking approach. He will make you justify everything."

Bowkett would agree. "People I have a lot of time for would find me approachable and easy going," he says. "People I don't have much time for probably think I'm an ogre. I used to judge people quickly, then I decided that this was not a very professional approach and they should go through an assessment process, but now, as I've got older, I've decided that quick assessments are best. It only takes half an hour to work out if you will be able to work with someone."

The details of his game plan aside, Bowkett makes light of his success, as if it is easy to become a millionaire. He claims that it is easy, provided you decide that that is what you want to do, and stick at it. "So few people stick to their game plan. I stuck to mine. I had always wanted to be a millionaire, from a very early age." He eventually became one at 39. "Four years behind my game plan". He talks about it as if it is a cause of personal dissatisfaction that he did not achieve that goal on time. "I have always had hurdles to achieve in my career and I have tended to achieve them earlier than other people in my peer group. Like getting a good job, becoming a director and then becoming financially independent."

Now that those goals have been met he admits that he no longer fully understands his motivation. "I have thought a lot about this," he says. "People usually cite things like power, status, money or whatever. Apart from flippant remarks like I need to do something because I'm too young to retire, I think a desire for status and recognition now drives me, but not so much power."

That admitted desire for status and recognition explains the derivation of his next goal.

"I have given myself ten years to put Berisford in the FT-SE 100," he says, hesitating. "At least that puts off the day of judgment for some time." He then laughs, as if he is only half serious, but by now you know that that slightly awkward laugh is intended only to disguise the seriousness of his intent. Neither he nor anyone who has ever worked alongside him has any doubt whatsoever but that that ambition will be achieved, and well within the ten-year deadline.

WEEK ENDING Matthew Bond

The light on the road to Damascus is the headlamp of a broken Rolls

AND so with one pound we are free. At least that is how I heard the catch phrase of those now convinced that better times are just around the corner. How far do they think we're going to get with one pound?

In fact, it is not even that. By the end of a week that yet again saw the Germans refusing to do the decent thing — revalue, cut interest rates, shut up — it was more a case of "and so with 85 per cent of a pound". And far from, of course. Interest rates may have come down, but only by a pip. Now I agree that "and so with 85 per cent of a pound we are still charged a real rate of interest of 6 per cent" is hardly an elegant, or convincing, way of heralding a new economic dawn, but it does have the benefit of accuracy.

Tuesday's cut in interest rates by a chancellor who seems to have flown back from Washington via Damascus (let's not get into who paid for the tickets) may yet be seen by economic historians as a crucial turning point in the affairs of Britain (and we won't go into them either) but from the foreshortened viewpoint of four days on, you would be hard pressed to tell. The recession is dead, said a government still giddy from its U-turns. Long live the recession, replied an economy that is clearly not for turning.

Not that the week lacked good news altogether. In the wake of the one-point interest rate cut, down came mortgages by three-quarters of a percentage point, once again raising one of the great mysteries of our time — where do all the missing quarter percents go? To gamble, perhaps, in the lush pastures of the foreign exchange market?

More encouraging was the four-point cut in the interest rate charged on John Lewis store cards from almost 24 per cent to 19.5 per cent, conjuring up a picture of recovery fuelled by booming sales of roller blinds and saucepans — a sort of non-stick economic kick-start. But this too served



as a reminder of another great unanswered question — why do credit card rates never come down?

Part of the answer, one suspects, lies with the likes of a man who, like the Chancellor, was having an improbably good week. Singing in the bath is just a start for George Walker who, despite being £18 million down, somehow avoided personal bankruptcy by the skin of a foreign exchange dealing margin.

Not having such a good week was the prime minister who, despite an amazing display of nimble principle work, looked in danger of having his long-sought recovery not just stalled but written off. For even as he put what only a brave commentator would describe as the finishing touches to Recovery Mark II, the British car industry threatened to collapse around him.

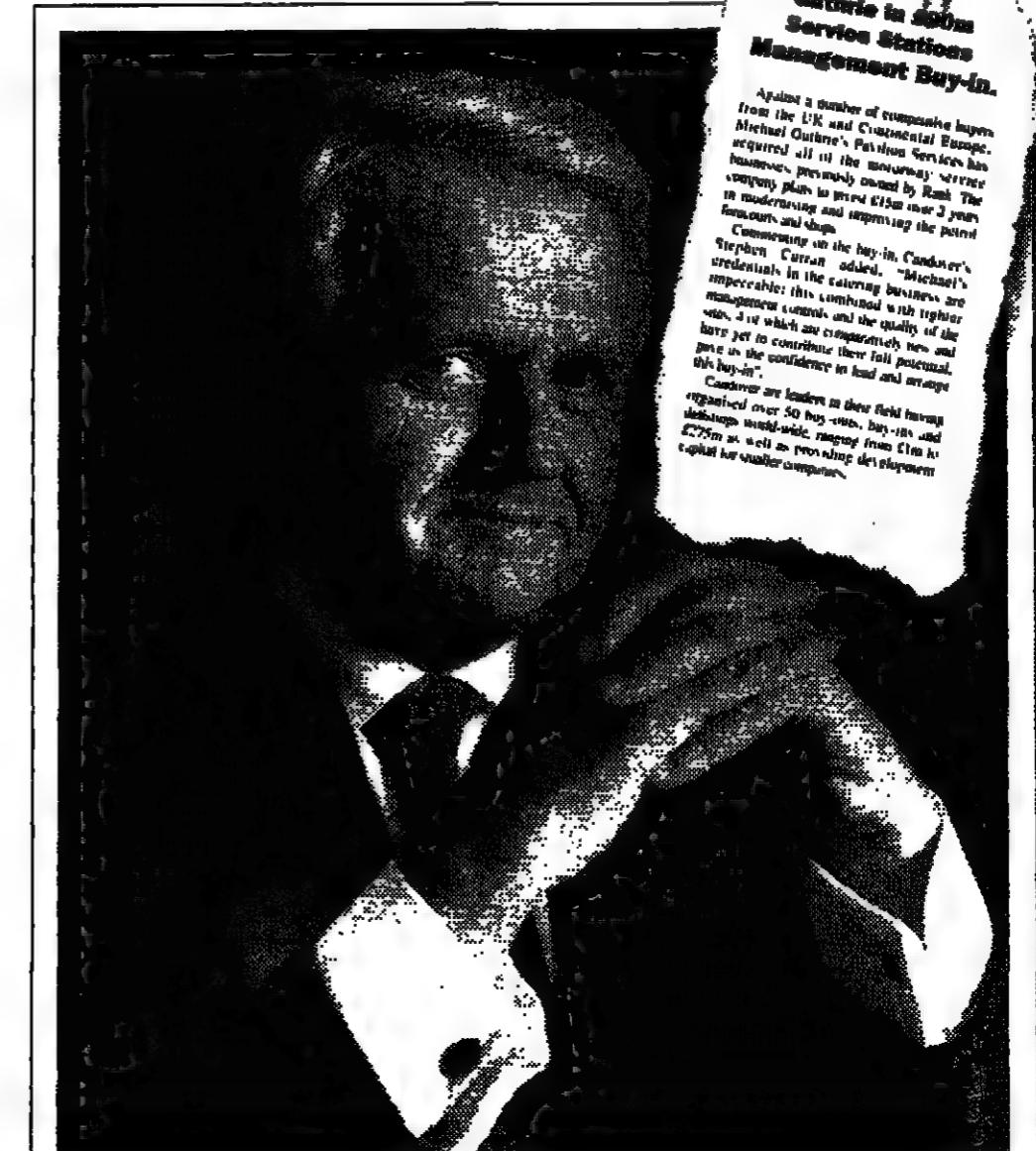
The bad news came at speed. Ford announced plans

where in the car market. For while le franc fort was passing its trial by speculation on the money markets of Europe, the repercussions of 'le pound faible' were being driven home in Britain. Doing the driving, inevitably, was a German, in the shape of executive toy maker, BMW, which announced that because of the devaluation of the pound prices would be rising by between 12 and 14 per cent.

The timing was particularly cruel, coming just 24 hours after a survey revealed that annual pay increases for British executives had fallen to a 25-year low of 5.5 per cent. Where BMW prices lead, the cost of plane tickets to Marbella can only follow. The seeds of inflation have been sown.

Back in the bunker at Number 10, news of the BMW price rises was greeted with improbable calm. When informed by an aide that the executives were revolting, the prime minister simply turned (yes again) and said: "Let them drive Rolls-Royces," thereby creating not just a moment in history but yet another alternative economic strategy, the so-called Silver Lining model.

Mindful of the fate that historically awaits those who throw down such challenges, the French were moving heaven and earth to maintain the value of the franc. For as the French currency teetered towards its ERM floor, the Vatican published its Universal Catechism, which conveniently listed speculation as one of the modern varieties of mortal sin. Having seen the full fury of words and bluster when the pound faced the same situation, Michel Sapin, the French finance minister, backed this fundamental approach. He simply reminded the money markets that during the revolution speculators were rewarded not with huge profits but with a one-way trip to Madame Guillotine. Amazingly, it worked. Is it too late to try it here? And, more importantly, where shall we start?



Who's next?

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STOCK MARKET

Sterling pressure takes spring out of shares

SHARE prices suffered a sharp turnaround as fresh weakness in the pound worried investors that another cut in interest rates would have to be postponed. The FT-SE 100 index made a confident start, soaring more than 36 points as UBS Phillips & Drew, the broker, carried out a £100 million buy programme. But the market's early enthusiasm soon waned, with the pound coming under further pressure against the mark as the Germans ruled out any changes to the exchange-rate mechanism.

There is now talk of a two-tier Europe — with Britain very much in the second tier. Despite further deterioration in late trading in London, with the Dow Jones industrial average on Wall Street opening more than 30 points lower, the index stayed above the 2,600 level — but only just. The index closed 20.2 points down on the day at 2,601 — but a rise on the week of 36 points.

Turnover continued to decline from its recent high levels, with 693 million shares traded. The bulk of the comprised trading between the market-makers and the programme trade. Genuine retail business remained thin. Al-

lied-Lyons, the food and drinks group, remained out of favour with a fall of 28p to 610p, stretching the two-day decline to 39p. The shares were hit on Thursday by talk of an imminent profits warning from the company and large selling of call options, equivalent to 500,000 shares.

Several brokers have since downgraded their profit estimates.

This helped to pull down the shares in other drinks companies. There were losses for Bass, 15p to 56p; Whitbread, 15p to 45p; Grand Metropolitan, 6p to 44p; Scottish & Newcastle, 12p to

424p and Guinness, 16p to 552p. However, there was some support for the second-tierers, with Greenalls 3p better at 304p; Greene King 3p at 440p; Marston, Thompson & Evershed 2p to 212p and Wolverhampton & Dudley 4p to 550p.

BiCC took an early lead to finish 7p cheaper at 278p as one big institutional seller tried to unload stock. However, James Capel, the broker, failed to place the line of 9.7 million shares at about the 279p level. Brokers fear that the shares will continue to overshadow the stock market price.

British Gas was steady at 245p after meeting James Capel on Thursday evening. Capel likes the shares and believes that the worries about regulatory problems are overblown.

Cable and Wireless was a nervous market, falling 32p to 582p, as it emerged that the Hong Kong government had awarded licences to operate telephone networks to two of C&W's rivals.

Vickers firm 1p to 85p in spite of Thursday's news that it is shedding 950 jobs at its Rolls-Royce Motors division. Strauss, the broker, is now forecasting that the group will plunge into the red for the full year with a loss of £35 million. Earlier estimates had suggested a profit of about £10 million.

Worries that further cuts in interest rates may now be delayed sent a shiver through the stores sector, which has



BICC: SHARES DECLINE AS INSTITUTIONAL SELLER LEAVES ITS MARK

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If the Personal Investment Authority, the proposed new body to regulate the personal investment industry, ever gets off the ground — and the way things are going, this still looks like a big “if” — the independent consumer representatives who will sit on the board will be vital.

The consultative document on the setting-up of the PIA, published this week, suggests that seven of the 30 seats on the governing body should be filled by what it terms “independent public interest members”. On the face of it, this looks a generous proportion. However, this judgment holds only if such members are strong enough, and committed enough, to fight the consumer's corner effectively.

The proposed election process for consumer members on the PIA board could prevent this from being the case. The appointment of each public interest member requires an 80 per cent majority of other board members, who will all, in one way or another, represent industry interests. Cynics could argue that, however

genuine the intention to protect consumer interests, to get four out of every five members to vote in favour of people who are known to fight strongly against vested industry interests could be a tall order.

The danger is, therefore, that the seven independent representatives will be selected from the pool of “soft” consumer commentators, who might make the odd protest during committee meetings, but are unlikely to rock the industry's boat when the actual decisions come to be made.

The Consumers' Association said it was unclear whether the 80 per cent rule was simply a device to calm industry fears, or whether something more sinister was intended. Jane Vass, head of the association's money group, says that, if the PIA takes off, she will be looking closely at the way consumer representatives are selected. Surprisingly, perhaps,



COMMENT

LINDSAY COOK
WEEKEND MONEY EDITOR

the association will not necessarily be pushing for membership because it feels it is often more useful to remain independent of the regulators. “In this case, it depends on how good the panel is, and who's on it.”

This last comment highlights one of the key problems facing those trying to establish a credible new regulatory body.

Few of the really important and influential organisations in the sector are prepared to do much more than observe, and occasionally comment on, their efforts from the sidelines. With a few notable exceptions,

banks, building societies and even the Securities and Investments Board have been very low key in their responses so far. A member of one large institution admitted that getting into bed with the seedier side of Fimbra's membership was worrying.

Policy trap

Sir Bryan Carsberg took aim at the life assurance industry this week, giving warning that he will tackle some of the abuses that have been allowed to go untouched

for too long. He wants an end to pitifully low surrender values that punish customers who cash in early rather than the salesmen who sell the wrong products or the industry that develops them. The days of the 25-year endowment policy must be numbered.

It will come as a relief to many homebuyers, who have to be made of stern stuff to resist the blandishments of mortgage lenders to avoid signing for an endowment loan when all they want is to buy a house. If they manage to arrange a mortgage without taking out an insurance policy with the company to which the lender is tied, they may think they are safe.

But no, the Nationwide, the second largest society, has been looking through its books and found 40,000 existing borrowers with repayment loans. It is offering them discounts on their mortgages for one year if

they convert to endowment arrangements.

They will, however, be paying out more because they will also be funding endowment policies to pay off their loans. The older they are, the more this will cost.

The society says it has had only one complaint (Letters, page 28). It denies that it is trying to sell inappropriate mortgage arrangements, but others must wonder.

When it comes to paying out, some insurers are a little tardier in sending out letters. A reader who has an endowment policy that matured on September 1, returned from holiday this week to find a letter from the insurance company asking to make an appointment to deliver the documents and update its records. No cheque was attached and the letter was not written until September 3.

The company explained to the reader, who has had to wait a month or more for the proceeds of two other policies with the same life office, that because he is ex-director they had been unable to contact him.

Mortgage rates cut to lowest level in 20 years

By LINDSAY COOK
MONEY EDITOR

MORTGAGE rates as low as 7.74 per cent, or fixed at 7.99 and 8.25 per cent, are on offer as a result of this week's bank base rate cut. They are the lowest rates for more than 20 years.

Lenders desperate to revive the housing market are coming up with fixed rate mortgages below 8 per cent for two or more years, and first-time buyer discounts that add to large loan discounts, take rates even lower.

Standard mortgage rates are below 10 per cent for the first time since the height of the housing boom in the summer of 1988. Lenders hope they will come down further before the end of the year.

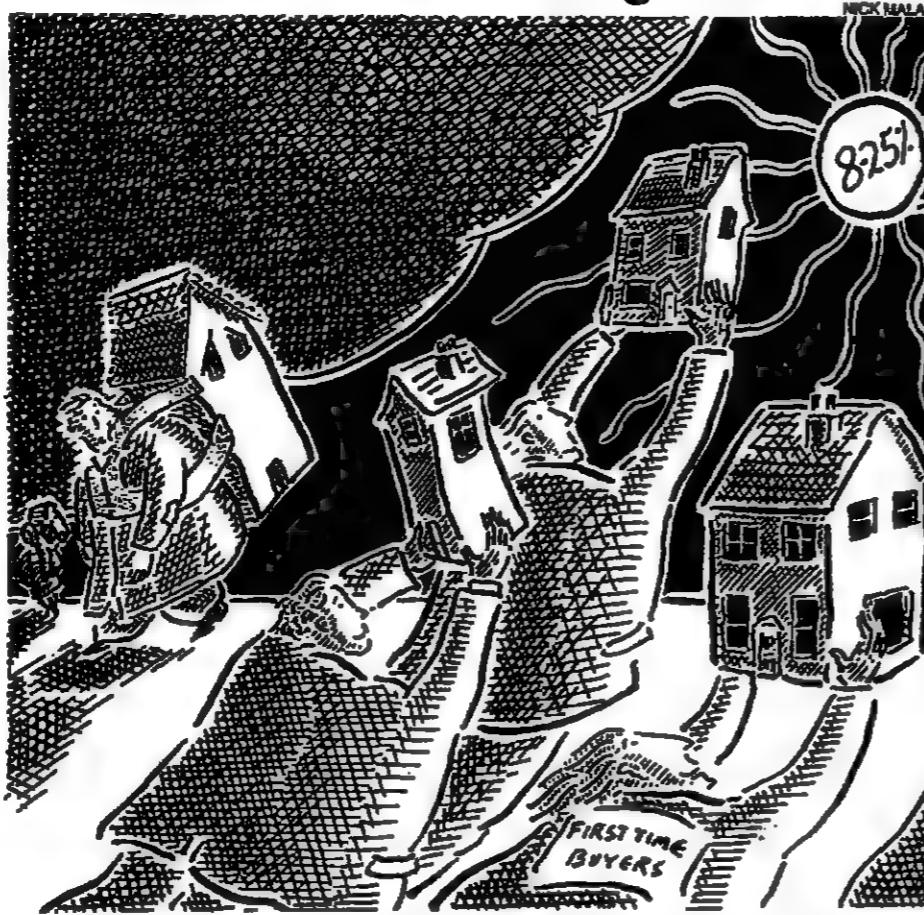
Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society, which has still to announce by how much it is going to cut its standard mortgage rate of 10.75 per cent, is offering a fixed rate mortgage at 8.25 per cent for loans of up to 80 per cent of a property's value. Unlike many fixed rates this has no compulsory insurance products attached and is available for repayment, interest only, endowment and pension mortgages. There is a £100 arrangement fee, which is cut to £50 for applicants who are interviewed in C&G branches.

It is the cheapest fixed rate, the sixth largest society has ever offered. Mortgage rates were last below 8.5 per cent in 1971, when the standard rate offered by all societies on repayment loans was 8 per cent.

The National & Provincial, which has a new standard mortgage rate of 9.99 per cent (annual percentage rate 10.6 per cent), also launched three fixed rate mortgages this week. Its lowest interest rate is 8.25 per cent for first time buyers borrowing more than £60,000. The loans, fixed until January 1995, have a £150 arrangement fee and buildings and contents insurance must be arranged via N&P unless lease conditions prevent buildings insurance being arranged separately.

Below £60,000, the rate is 8.45 per cent and, for those needing to borrow more than 90 per cent of the value, the fixed rate is 0.3 percentage points more. The mortgages are available on repayment loans as well as endowment and pension mortgages.

The best fixed-rate mortgage is on offer from a centralised lender through Chase de Vere, a London broker. It is



fixed at 7.99 per cent until January 1994. There is an arrangement fee of £300, but no conditional insurance. It is available on repayment, endowment and pension loans. When the guarantee expires another will be offered. TSB is offering fixed-rate mortgages at 8.99 per cent over three years and a five-year fixed rate at 9.3 per cent. Both are available on repayment and endowment loans. There is an arrangement fee of £195 on

The last time the Abbey offered a rate below 8% was in 1968 when base mortgage rate was 7.625%

the fixed-rate offers and the chance to win one year's mortgage payments in a prize draw.

Those borrowers who opt for fixed rates must be sure they will stay the course. Those who move to another lender or a variable rate before the guarantee has expired usually have to pay several months' interest as a penalty.

Abbey National, the second largest mortgage lender, has cut its standard mortgage rate by 0.75 per cent to 9.95 per cent from November 1 for existing customers. Discounts on larger loans have been

when the base mortgage rate for all societies was 7.625 per cent. It rose to 8.5 per cent the following April.

For those who feel that variable mortgage rates are set to come down further, Blyth McKenna, a London broker, is offering a capped mortgage rate of 9.5 per cent. The interest rate cannot rise above 9.5 per cent for three years but, if the mortgage rate of the bank making the loans available falls below this, then the capped customers will also benefit. There is a charge of 0.5 per cent of the loan plus an arrangement fee of £150.

But the easing of margins for their core business should lead lenders to make market-beating offers to new borrowers in the spring when they will hope to see some revival in the housing market.

The best fixed-rate offers launched this week are historically cheap and are likely to be taken up quickly. Borrowers hoping for better variable rates should remember that, when base rates were down to 7.5 per cent in 1988, most lenders did not cut their mortgage rates below 9.5 per cent.

If another 1 per cent base rate cut is forthcoming, lenders are unlikely to cut rates below 9 per cent. First-time buyer discounts are also likely to be shaved in the future. As their numbers in the market place increase, lenders will no longer feel the need to make such attractive offers.

Centralised lenders take their time

By LIZ DOLAN

BORROWERS who have mortgages with centralised lenders, rather than building societies or banks, are likely to have to wait longer for the effects of the interest rate cuts to reach their monthly payments. Banks and building societies get the bulk of their cash from savers' deposits, but centralised lenders only deal in loans, so they have to raise all their funds on the money markets. Under this system, falling interest rates feed through much more slowly to mortgage bills.

Some customers of overseas lenders are even facing rate rises. One reader was horrified to receive a letter from his lender this week saying that the interest rate on his mortgage was being increased by 1 per cent on October 1. In other words, at a time when the bank rate had fallen by 1 per cent, he learned that the rate charged on his mortgage was to go up from 11.1875 per cent to 12.1875 per cent.

The lender, Kreditforeningen, Denmark, based in Copenhagen, blamed increasing costs because of difficult UK market conditions. The letter said: “The situation has now reached a point where it

is inevitable that the higher costs of operating in the United Kingdom be reflected in the rates charged to our borrowers.” The reader said: “When I signed the mortgage papers, I understood my rate of interest was geared to Libor — not dependent on their losses. I am not prepared to subsidise their losses in this arbitrary manner.” Kreditforeningen said simply: “We are not prepared to comment on this matter.”

National Home Loans, whose lending policy has already landed it in deep trouble, said managers were meeting next week to discuss its variable rate, which is currently 12.15 per cent, or 12.65 per cent for remortgages. The Household Mortgage Corporation also said its rates were under review, but it had “no idea” when a cut could be made. HMC's variable rate is currently 11.45 per cent, although it says nearly one third of its 40,000 customers have mortgages capped at lower rates. Those who took out loans for more than 90 per cent of the value of their property are paying 11.95 per cent. The Mortgage Corporation is

another centralised lender yet to move on mortgage interest rates. It says its current rate is under review, but could give no indication when a new one would be announced, or what the rate would be. At the moment, Mortgage Corporation customers are charged a minimum of 10.99 per cent. Non-status borrowers pay more.

Meanwhile, there will be no early end to the miseries of people who took out deferred-rate mortgages at the end of the 1980s and are now facing rate rises of up to 40 per cent. Low-start mortgages were popular in the boom years because they were offered at a temptingly low initial interest rate. This was set to rise after, typically, three years. Their attractions were based on expected rises in incomes and house prices, and falls in interest rates. Instead house prices fell and many people lost jobs or failed to increase earnings by as much as hoped.

Latest figures show house prices are now 15 per cent below their peak. People on deferred interest mortgages are three times as likely to fall into arrears as those

paying ordinary variable rates.

New year cheer for millions of homebuyers



Blackburn: 9.95% base rate

mortgage payments on a £60,000 endowment loan are set to fall more than £70 a month to take account of the overpayment since rates fell in March and the three reductions. Leeds Permanent customers will be the first to benefit from the year's reductions when their new rate is set in mid-October. The fifth largest society, headed by Mike Blackburn, which has a September 30 year-end, has an annual review rate of 11.5 per cent for the 450,000 customers who pay this way. Payments from November 1 will be based on the 9.95 per cent rate it introduced next month for existing customers.

When Britain joined the exchange-rate mechanism two years ago, the Leeds delayed calculating its annual review payments for the 90 per cent of its borrowers on the scheme so they could have

immediate benefit of the 1 per cent base rate cut. The Bradford & Bingley, which has virtually all its borrowers on its annual review scheme, also had a base mortgage rate of 11.5 per cent when the payments were set in January for payment from February. Borrowers can ask for their payments to be revised before the next review date if they want some respite from high outgoings.

But few take the option, particularly borrowers whose homes are worth less than their mortgages. Up to 1.5 million borrowers are caught in this trap and cannot move unless they can pay the difference between the loan and the property.

Most of National & Provincial's borrowers are making payments based on 11.5 per cent. The society set its new base mortgage rate at 9.99

per cent this week. Nationwide has set its new rate at 9.95 per cent from November 1 for existing borrowers and has 400,000 borrowers on annual review, making payments set when its base rate was 11.5 per cent. Cheltenham & Gloucester has 85 per cent of its borrowers on annual year-end review, though it will allow customers to adjust payments in the interim. Abbey, National, Alliance & Leicester and Bristol & West change mortgage payments each time rates change.

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Women to be offered career break options

WORKING women are to be offered the chance to insure their incomes under a scheme that will allow them to take premium breaks when they have children (Lindsay Cook writes). Legal & General has revised the cover on its Income Protection Plan to allow women to take career breaks and automatically start their insurance cover again when they return to work.

The index-linked insurance, which replaces wages when someone is too ill to work, avoids any further need for health checks when a mother goes back to work. And because it is reinstated, it means that the policyholder does not have to start

again on higher age-related premiums as is the case with a completely new contract. Both these factors should cut the cost of the cover.

Since the beginning of the month, Legal & General has been increasing the cover provided by income protection policies in line with national average earnings rather than retail prices. This creates a closer link with the income being replaced, argues the insurer.

Heidi Matthew, life and pensions marketing manager, said: "The work patterns of women have changed greatly in recent years. Continuous cover overcomes their difficulties in obtaining long-

term income protection." The plan is available for anyone aged 16 to 54 and the minimum premium is £10 per month or £100 a year. Up to 75 per cent of an income of the first £45,000 of earnings can be covered, plus a third of earnings above that. For the self-employed woman, cover is based on net taxable profit.

The policy pays out when a woman is unable to work through illness or after an accident. If she should want to return to work on a part-time basis to a lower-paid job while recuperating, the plan will pay a reduced benefit to cover the difference between the income before and after the illness or disability.

INVESTORS who are fazed by stock market jargon and complicated fund structures are targeted by a new investment trust personal equity plan (Pep), to be launched next month.

Martin Currie, the Scottish investment house, has decided to keep both the marketing literature and structure of the new plan as simple as possible to widen the potential market.

In the interests of simplicity, only lump sums may be invested. There is no savings plan, as even this simple extra is considered an unnecessary complication. Fees are charged at a flat rate, rather than on a percentage, or tiered, basis for the same reason.

Chris Berger-North, the marketing co-ordinator, has made plain English a feature of both the application form and of all the accompanying marketing literature.

He said: "We have made a real effort to use shorter sentences and paragraphs and, as far as possible, a question-and-answer format. The hardest task was to keep the application form to a single page, written in easy to understand language. It was also very difficult to get the lawyers to use simple language, but we think we've managed it."

To further enhance its user-friendly nature, the Pep is

marked as an investment club. "We want to make it less impersonal than others of a similar nature," Mr Berger-North said. "If the concept works, we may look at extending it."

He added: "We think the Pep market is moving towards simple products. Plans with lots of additional features can be very expensive to administer, while at the same time confusing, rather than encouraging, some of the potential investors."

Club members must choose one of four investment trusts which, because they are at least 50 per cent invested in European stocks, are eligible for Pep tax breaks. These are: Scottish Eastern, Securities Trust of Scotland, St Andrew Trust and Martin Currie European, invested respectively for capital growth in world markets, income growth in world markets, capital growth in smaller companies worldwide and capital growth in Europe.

The minimum initial investment is £2,000, with subsequent payments of £1,000 up to the £6,000 Pep limit. Fees include £50 initial membership fee, £60 annual subscription deducted at £5 a month, £20 per subsequent investment, £20 per withdrawal and £15 per transfer from existing Peps, irrespective of the number of plans.

PEP M&G DIVIDEND PERFORMANCE SINCE LAUNCH

Year Ended 31st Dec	£6,000 Lump Sum			£50 per month			
	M&G Dividend Net	M&G Dividend Gross	Gross Building Society	Amount Invested	M&G Dividend Net	M&G Dividend Gross	Gross Building Society
6.5.1964	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	£50	£50	£50	£50
1964	5,796	5,796	6,230	350	319	319	357
1965	6,504	6,672	6,633	950	974	992	1,001
1966	6,120	6,350	7,094	1,550	1,457	1,487	1,693
1967	7,224	7,728	7,610	2,150	2,331	2,424	2,439
1968	9,900	10,872	8,187	2,750	3,866	4,087	5,249
1969	8,256	9,252	8,872	3,350	3,766	4,022	4,148
1970	8,376	9,636	9,634	3,950	4,411	4,784	5,132
1971	12,696	15,036	10,437	4,550	7,452	8,236	6,186
1972	15,696	18,960	11,286	5,150	9,839	11,017	7,315
1973	11,832	14,496	12,395	5,750	7,869	8,878	8,667
1974	7,224	9,036	13,810	6,350	5,225	5,956	10,294
1975	16,164	20,760	15,373	6,950	12,446	14,446	12,095
1976	15,540	20,436	17,078	7,550	12,512	14,770	14,072
1977	24,696	33,288	18,939	8,150	20,559	24,739	16,241
1978	27,396	37,812	20,817	8,750	23,390	28,689	18,482
1979	28,476	40,176	23,434	9,350	24,848	31,022	21,448
1980	32,436	46,836	27,023	9,950	28,864	36,727	25,386
1981	37,464	55,488	30,688	10,550	33,929	44,107	29,470
1982	45,672	69,288	34,667	11,150	41,981	55,699	33,931
1983	65,954	102,180	38,362	11,750	61,304	82,815	38,180
1984	90,504	142,368	42,722	12,350	84,781	116,061	43,157
1985	112,968	180,180	48,189	12,950	106,456	147,530	49,323
1986	152,352	245,892	53,615	13,550	144,214	201,966	55,510
1987	184,248	300,696	59,392	14,150	174,961	247,537	62,125
1988	203,160	335,276	65,131	14,750	193,510	276,549	68,757
1989	257,076	428,544	73,382	15,350	245,483	354,160	78,117
1990	216,640	368,880	84,046	15,950	209,307	305,380	90,123
1991	226,320	387,120	93,554	16,550	217,187	321,009	100,945
31.8.1992	221,040	384,480	99,409*	16,950	212,462	319,164	107,658*

Notes: The values shown have been calculated as if an M&G PEP and its current tax treatment were available throughout the period shown. All net figures include re-invested income. M&G Dividend figures show the return to the investor. The Building Society figures are based on the average rate of a Building Society Share Account (Source: Central Statistical Office). The regular savings figures exclude the last payment and all payments apart from the first are made on the last business day of the month. An investment of £6,000 on 31st August, 1987 would be worth £5,756 by 31st August, 1992 with net income re-invested. An investment of £50 per month from 31st August, 1987 (£3,000) would be worth £2,778 by 31st August, 1992 with net income re-invested and £2,884 with gross income re-invested. *Estimated using current interest rate levels. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. The price of units and the income from them may go down as well as up. You may get back less than you invested.

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INVESTMENT HOUSES TRY THE SIMPLE APPROACH TO WOO INVESTORS

Capel breaks new ground with its 'Footsie Fund'

BY LINDSAY COOK, MONEY EDITOR

A FUND that ordinary investors can understand is to be launched by James Capel on Monday. The Footsie Fund, as it is bound to be known, is the first to invest purely in the shares of Britain's top 100 companies.

The fund will replicate the FT-SE 100 index and match its capital performance to within 0.02 per cent a month, according to James Capel Unit Trust Management.

Nigel Legge, sales and marketing director, says: "The beauty of the fund is the simplicity. People have got used to hearing Trevor McDonald telling them every night what has happened to the FT-SE."

During the recent ups and downs for interest rates and the pound, fluctuations in the FT-SE index have been detailed on news bulletins. At its low point after the stock market crash in 1987, the index stood at 1,582.

After the election this year, it rose sharply, reaching 2,725 on May 8. That gain was wiped out in the following months. The index started September at 2,312 and three weeks later was up 250 points. A rival investment group, Save & Prosper, says it will end the year at 2,750 or 2,800.

The index shows the prices of the shares in it have performed. It does not include dividend income from the equities.

Research for James Capel showed that investors were happier putting their money into an index of the largest British companies than leaving it to a fund manager to pick the shares most likely to gain. Sainsbury, British Gas,

Glaxo, Sun Alliance, Marks and Spencer, Kingfisher, Guinness, Shell, Hanson and Abbey National are among the top 100 companies.

According to Micropal, a firm of performance analysts, the FT-SE has consistently outperformed most unit trusts in every UK equity sector over one to ten years.

Over five years — since the eve of the crash — only four out of 74 growth funds have beaten the index on an off-to-offer basis, with income not reinvested.

Only two out of 93 income funds and three out of 69 general funds outperformed it

over the same period. Over ten years, 31 out of 136 UK funds have outperformed the FT-SE, according to Micropal.

Political fights undermine foundations of PIA

A new regulatory body to cover investments is under threat, reports Liz Dolan

POLITICAL in-fighting could scupper proposals to set up a regulatory body to control the way investment products are sold to the public.

Plans to establish the Personal Investment Authority have met varying degrees of interest from the industry. Some, especially the important banking and building society sectors, have been notably lacking in enthusiasm.

Sir Bryan Hayes, chairman of the formation committee, unveiled the PIA consultative document this week with fellow committee members Kit Jebens and Godfrey Jilings, dismissed fears that the venture may founder because of lack of support. He said failure to gain enough support to secure a credible new regulatory framework would be "very serious" for the industry.

He added that one of his most important tasks had been to bring the banks and building societies on board, as institutions that sold life assurance and unit trusts and offered independent financial advice. The 11th-hour arrival on the formation committee of the Northern Rock Building Society, TSB and Barclays gave grounds for optimism.

But the British Banking Association, which represents the clearing banks, said: "All we are saying at the moment is



Putting the case for PIA: Sir Bryan with Kit Jebens (left) and Godfrey Jilings (right)

the banks will be carefully considering the consultative document. It is true we have been less than enamoured with the idea, but it is up to our members to decide whether they want to join. Barclays said:

"We are neither for nor against. We are on the committee because we felt we could contribute to the debate."

Abey National said: "We

don't see much reason for change. We are perfectly happy with the regulatory authorities we have at the moment."

National Westminster agreed: "We prefer the flexibility of the present system."

The Halifax said: "We don't

really have much to say on

this. We've received a copy of the document and are considering it." The Consumers' Association gave a warning: "The major banks and building societies must be involved if the PIA is to work. Without them, the scheme will founder. We would urge as many businesses as are eligible to join the authority." Wrangling over compensation levies and board representation should not be allowed to jeopardise the PIA, it said.

The Association of British Insurers has threatened to withdraw its support if the banks and building societies refuse to play ball. "Someone had to do it," said Brian

Richardson, chairman of ABI's Life Insurance Council.

The Securities and Investments Board, many of whose members are expected to join the PIA, will lose money from lost subscriptions. There are reports that it has been trying to persuade members to stay but a spokeswoman said: "I do not think that can be true. So far, we haven't made a public statement on this." SIB said it would subject the proposals to a "rigorous evaluation", but hoped the PIA would come to fruition. Intra is said by some to be less enthusiastic privately than its public statements suggest. Responses deadline is November 6.

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Joffe pushes for life sales reform

By PAUL NUKE



Joffe: attack on regulator

A NEW independent research unit which will investigate ways of improving investor protection and lobby for change in the way life assurance is sold is to be set up by Joel Joffe, the former deputy chairman of Allied Dunbar and for 20 years one of the industry's most influential executives.

Joffe, who as a young South African lawyer defended Nelson Mandela, recently launched a blistering attack on the life industry and its regulators.

In a detailed document sent to the Office of Fair Trading (OFT), which is currently investigating the effectiveness of regulation in financial services, he accused life assurance companies of gross mis-selling and its regulators of inaction and subversion.

Joffe said this week that the new research unit, to be independently funded and launched in the next three months, would push for the reform of

savers and press for change... I am recruiting for staff now," he said.

Jean Eaglesham, head of the Consumers' Association's money group, welcomed the move this week but many within the life industry privately regard Joffe as a hypocrite and a turncoat. They point out that Joffe, a millionaire, made his fortune as a founding director of Allied Dunbar — a company that pioneered many of the sales methods and products he is now criticising.

Joffe is sensitive to such accusations but says his conscience is clear. As joint managing director and later deputy chairman of Allied Dunbar, he gained a reputation as an idealist who always backed the customer's cause, and he was responsible for setting up many of the company's charitable trusts.

He also said he had been pushing for change from the inside for some time. In 1985 he sent a document to MIBOC, a self-regulatory org-

anisation that preceded the SIB and Lutro, which argued for statutory regulation and, if anything, was more outspoken in its criticism of the insurance industry than the one recently sent to the OFT.

the regulation system which would force insurance companies to reduce their charges or stick to selling protection-based products like term assurance.

"It will be a research institute which will specialise in financial services and investigate what is happening to

the regulation system from the inside for some time. In 1985 he sent a document to MIBOC, a self-regulatory org-

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Clearly the Government will not want to cut rates so low as to import, or fuel, inflation. But they may well be prepared to see some further erosion of sterling. We, therefore, believe that interest rates will be down to 8% by Christmas and perhaps even lower later.

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No	Company	Group	Gain or loss
1	Scoton	Transport	
2	Laing	Building/Rds	
3	Heinek	Drapery/Sts	
4	Prudential	Insurance	
5	Read Int'l	Newspaper/Pub	
6	Estates Gen	Property	
7	P & O Dfl	Transport	
8	Stand Chart	Banks/Disc	
9	Electron House	Electrical	
10	Watson & Phil	Food	
11	AAH	Industrial	
12	Enterprise	Gas	
13	UniChem	Industrial	
14	Northumbrian	Water	
15	TSW	Leisure	
16	Rotork	Industrial	
17	Seaboard	Electricity	
18	Young's	Breweries	
19	Hazelwood Rds	Foods	
20	Yorkshire Elec	Electricity	
21	Davis Services	Industrial	
22	Betawear	Drapery/Sts	
23	Homeside	Drapery/Sts	
24	Norwest	Electricity	
25	Park Foods	Food	
26	Headline	Newspaper/Pub	
27	FS Cons	Mining	
28	Readicut	Textiles	
29	Londo & Man	Insurance	
30	MAM	Financial Trst	
31	GUS	Drapery/Sts	
32	Grove King	Breweries	
33	Bowater	Industrial	
34	GEC	Electrical	
35	Henderson Ad	Financial Trst	
36	P-E Intern'l	Electrical	
37	Pict Per	Oils/Gas	
38	Eurooneye Pd	Newspaper/Pub	
39	Medeva	Industrial	
40	Hammerson	Property	
41	Watt Blake	Building/Rds	
42	Sah Western	Electricity	
43	Glymed	Industrial	
44	St Helens	Mining	
45	Times Newspapers Ltd.	Total	

Please take into account any minus signs

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MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT Sun Total

Mrs Moira Woodford, of Newcastle on Tyne, won the £2,000 Portfolio Platinum prize yesterday.

No	Company	Price	Net	Yld	P/E
1	Ed Allcocks	311	0	10.2	10.2
2	Alfred Pritch	178	0	8.2	10.2
3	2m Ambler	311	0	10.2	10.2
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MOTOR RACING

Rumours fly as Mansell escapes from accident

FROM NORMAN HOWELL IN ESTORIL

NIGEL Mansell emerged as the fastest qualifier yesterday for the Portuguese grand prix here tomorrow despite spinning off the track at 175mph during the first practice session.

Mansell's spin came after the hydraulic-electronic suspension system on his Williams-Renault collapsed, locking it in gear. The car ended up in a sand-trap with the driver unhurt. Mansell said: "The hydraulic pump sheared and the car was left jammed in sixth. There was nothing I could do. It was the first complete failure this year. It was a very big moment, believe me, it was one of the most frightening of my career and I had to concentrate hard to get over it this afternoon."

Mansell showed no ill-effects, clocking the fastest time of the day ahead of his teammate, Riccardo Patrese, and the two McLaren drivers, Gerhard Berger and Ayrton Senna, in that order.

As usual, there was almost as much incident off the track too, with talk concentrating on who will succeed Mansell and Patrese, at Williams and whether Senna will remain at McLaren.

It is being speculated that Ron Dennis, the head of the McLaren team, has managed to acquire Renault engines, possibly by buying them from the French team, Ligier, to replace those provided by Honda. Dennis would have done this for two reasons: first to secure a competitive engine

for 1993, and second, to entice Alain Prost, under contract at Williams, to drive for him next year.

Another scenario has Dennis, who arrived yesterday afternoon — later than is usual — somehow convincing Renault to supply him with the same engines that Williams will have next year, leaving the off-the-shelf variety to the state-backed French team, Ligier.

This engine merry-go-round also affects the drivers. It seems that Prost's contract is such that he is immovable from Williams, where Renault will pay his wages. Rumour has it that Benetton may have finally agreed to give Patrese back to Williams, in exchange for Al Unser Jr — and thus guarantee the continuity that the technical people had been demanding.

Martin Brundle, the British driver who is not being retained by Benetton, may be the loser in all of this, as may Senna. If Senna cannot get into the Williams, he would not like to be beaten by Prost.

A Williams-Renault, on paper at least, is bound to be better than a McLaren-Renault. Senna may take a year off.

More should become fact today as Patrick Faure, the head of Renault Sport, will be arriving at the circuit. And so will Prost. Time is running out. There are two Williams cars being tested here on Tuesday. One will be driven by Damon Hill, the other is meant to be driven by Prost.



Olympic lights: Sally Gunnell, centre, the gold medal-winning athlete, meets the Britain hockey players, Mandy Nichol, left, and Sam Wright

League clubs now forced to foot the bill

By ALEX RAMSAY

ENGLISH women's hockey starts its season today beset by financial problems — only seven weeks after the Great Britain team had been celebrating a bronze medal in the Olympic Games.

The national league has lost its sponsorship and so the onus of paying for the competition structure falls on the clubs. That is the least of their worries for there will be no perks or travelling expenses which, for far-flung clubs like Exmouth, can run into thousands of pounds.

This will also be the last season of the format of two

divisions. Next year, the league will be expanded to include 24 teams in three divisions of eight.

"We always planned to expand," Terese Morris, the executive director of the All-England Women's Hockey Association, said. "We felt three divisions was the best way to iron out big differences between the top clubs and the newcomers to the league.

"We have seen the clubs coming up slowly through the divisions do much better than those thrown in at the deep end straight away."

Some first division clubs, however, will be starting their league programme at the

deep end today. The main gathering of international players will be at Ipswich, who take on Salford Coldfield.

Sutton will be able to call on the services of their Great Britain players, Jane Sizsmith and Lisa Bayliss, while Ipswich will be fielding a new-look team for the coming season.

Adding to the experience of Sandie Lister and Vickie Dixon, the new Ipswich coach, Toby Mullins, has the Britain and England goalkeeper, Jo Thompson, and Lucy Youngs and Kirstin Spencer, both from the England senior

team, as well as a new manager in Donna Mills and, while they are hoping the new cast list will improve their chances this year, they are having a few testing problems in getting to know one another.

Thompson's move from Slough marks the break-up of the squad that won three titles. Her departure leaves Slough with just one goalkeeper in Sue Knight, who has lived so long in Thompson's shadow and is now relishing the chance to prove herself.

With Kate White, Annette Stroud and Sue Frost also missing from the line-up, the coach, Ian Jennings, has only one new face — Julia Robert-

son, from Ealing — to fill the vacancies.

The captaincy has also changed hands, with Karen Brown taking over from Kate Parker. But Brown is still plagued by a chronic back injury and has withdrawn from the England international against Spain next week.

Slough's first match is against Doncaster, a team which may not win many matches but which are proving increasingly difficult to beat. With so many changes at the Berkshire club, this may be the year Slough finally let slip their vice-like grip on the championship title.

RESULT: Quarter-final: S Davis b J Parrott 0-1

ESTORIL DETAILS	
FIRST PRACTICE SESSION: 1, N Mansell (GB), Williams-Renault, 1 min 13.041sec, average speed 103.229 mph, 2, R Patrese (Ita), Williams-Renault, 1 min 13.052sec, 3, G Berger (Austria), McLaren-Honda, 1 min 13.117sec, 4, A Senna (Br), McLaren-Honda, 1 min 13.343sec, 5, M Schumacher (Ger), Benetton, 1 min 13.352sec, 6, J Arnoux (Fr), Ligier, 1 min 13.354sec, 7, M Alboreto (Ita), Lotus-Ford, 1 min 13.358sec, 8, J Herbert (GB), Lotus-Ford, 1 min 13.359sec, 9, M Brundle (GB), Williams-Renault, 1 min 13.360sec, 10, J Alesi (Fr), Ferrari, 1 min 13.367sec, 11, M Moreno (Spa), Williams-Ford, 1 min 13.368sec, 12, A de Cesari (Ita), Tyrrell-Ilmor, 1 min 13.369sec, 13, A Senna (Br), McLaren, 1 min 13.370sec, 14, S Cecotto (Venezuela), Footwork Mugen-Honda, 1 min 13.370sec, 15, E Comer (Fr), Lotus-Renault, 1 min 13.384sec, 16, O Grouillard (Fr), Venturi, 1 min 13.512sec, 17, B Sohier (Fr), Venturi, 1 min 13.513sec, 18, D Brundle (GB), Williams-Ford, 1 min 13.515sec, 19, J M de Villiers (SA), BWM Williams-Ford, 1 min 13.517sec, 20, M Gugelmin (Br), Jordan-Yamaha, 1 min 13.549sec, 21, G Morbidelli (Ita), Minardi, 1 min 13.552sec.	
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (after 13 rounds). Drivers: 1, M Mansell (GB), Williams-Renault, 100; 2, R Patrese (Ita), Williams-Renault, 93; 3, G Berger (Austria), McLaren-Honda, 89; 4, A Senna (Br), McLaren-Honda, 88; 5, M Schumacher (Ger), Benetton, 87; 6, J Arnoux (Fr), Ligier, 86; 7, M Alboreto (Ita), Lotus-Ford, 84; 8, J Herbert (GB), Lotus-Ford, 83; 9, M Brundle (GB), Williams-Renault, 82; 10, S Cecotto (Venezuela), Footwork Mugen-Honda, 81; 11, E Comer (Fr), Lotus-Renault, 78; 12, A de Cesari (Ita), Tyrrell-Ilmor, 77; 13, A Senna (Br), McLaren, 72; 14, F Perrini, 15, S Lotus, 11; 15, F Grouillard (Fr), Venturi, 10; 16, B Sohier (Fr), Venturi, 9; 17, D Brundle (GB), Williams-Ford, 8; 18, M Gugelmin (Br), Jordan-Yamaha, 7; 19, G Morbidelli (Ita), Minardi, 6; 20, G Morbidelli (Ita), Minardi, 5.	
REMAINING GRAND PRIX: Tomorrow: Portuguese (Estoril). October 22: Japanese (Suzuka). November 8: Australian (Adelaide).	
THE NEW SHORT CORNER DRILL	
Players try to adapt to change	
By SYDNEY FRISKIN	
<p>UP TO the time of the Olympic Games in Barcelona, the short corner, more widely known as the penalty corner, was a simple matter. The ball was pushed forward from the line, a player stopped it at the top of the circle and another dispatched it towards goal.</p>	
<p>Now all that has changed. Under the new rule, which requires the initial hit from the line to be stopped outside the circle, the ball may still be stopped inside the circle but it must go outside it at some stage before a shot at goal is taken.</p>	
<p>The attacking side, on the other hand, has to think of several plays in order to create an opening inside the circle for a player to have a shot. There is increased danger of players hitting a moving ball. Umpires will have to be more vigilant.</p>	
<p>If the ball, initially hit from the line, travels five yards beyond the circumference of the circle, it will be deemed to be in normal play and will not necessarily have to be stopped.</p>	
<p>In recent practice matches, one or two clubs experimented by extending their range of activity by starting the proceedings with a hit from somewhere near the corner flag.</p>	
<p>In any case, the player taking the initial hit, which has to be made at least ten yards away from the goalpost, must have at least one foot behind the back line.</p>	
<p>Havant and Hounslow renew rivalry</p>	
<p>HAVANT renew their rivalry with Hounslow in the English Club Champions' Trophy — the curtain-raiser to the season at East Grinstead tomorrow (Sydney Friskin writes).</p>	
<p>Much has been done to retain the carnival atmosphere initiated by Havant, who staged the match at short notice last year.</p>	
<p>Havant's squad includes the two newcomers, Cross and Parson. Hounslow have left out Boyles and McCrickett from their original 18.</p>	
<p>Six players from Britain's Barcelona Olympic team will make appearances — Row-</p>	
<p>lands, Williams and Garcia for Havant, and Potter, Robert Thompson and Bolland for Hounslow.</p>	
<p>But with several young players anxious to make their mark, there is no knowing what new talent will come to the surface.</p>	
<p>The rolling substitutes' rule will enable each side to make as many changes as they want.</p>	
<p>Mannheimer bring a young side, with Thomas Hahl their only Germany international.</p>	
<p>the two-day programme that starts today.</p>	
<p>All eyes, though, will be on the main event, in which the same teams took part last year, with Hounslow emerging victorious.</p>	
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RUGBY UNION

Exodus of players causing concern to New Zealanders

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

TEAMS in the northern hemisphere will watch carefully the upshot of a meeting on Monday when leading New Zealand players meet their country's rugby administrators in Wellington to discuss the "player-drain", to Europe and, most recently, to Japan. The implication is that further recompense for players may stop the trend.

Sean Fitzpatrick, the All Blacks captain, Mike Brewer, John Kirwan and Ian Jones are to meet a New Zealand Rugby Football Union committee while, at the same time, Eddie Tonks, chairman of the NZRFU council, will be in Tokyo to discuss with Shiggy Konno, chairman of the Japanese RFU, some amelioration of the situation in which senior players are lost to New Zealand.

Although a handful of New Zealanders have played on the *Continent* during their off-season for the last 20 years, the problem has come to a head recently with the loss – particularly from the North Harbour union – of players accepting jobs in Japan which involve rugby coaching. The best known of those is Kevin Schuler, a forward capped on the recent tour of Australia.

Burgess looks for flair from North

By DAVID HANDS

OSSIE Ardiles is not a name on everyone's lips in rugby clubhouses but, happily, the enjoyment of sport *per se* cuts across the narrow boundaries of one code as against another. "I like Ardiles's attitude," John Burgess says. "He thinks he can win playing skilful soccer, bell on the ground.

"I think we can do that in rugby union. In the North, we are not interested in winning just by physical presence. I enjoy winning but I like sides to win in the right way."

Burgess will not worry if he is viewed as an idealist; his record in rugby administration speaks for itself and, now, after being England coach and president of the Rugby Football Union, his role as director of playing activities for the Northern Division seems to suit him as well as any rugby hat he has worn.

The North is a divisional role model: its position as a distinct rugby entity has been enhanced this year after an unbeaten tour of Zimbabwe and Namibia in August, the visit to Dublin to play Leinster this month and the meeting on October 14 with Wales B, a first for an English divisional side, the team for which will be confirmed this weekend.

The focal point is November 10, when the North play the South Africans at Elland Road; thereafter, success in the divisional championship. The agenda will be the same next year: a tour is planned for the summer with the game against the touring New Zealanders the main aim.

"We have identified a number of players of potential below national-division level, which we have to do because

The defections reflect, too, the depressed state of the New Zealand economy, and Tim Gresson, a member of the NZRFU committee, admitted yesterday that while nothing could be done to stop individuals seeking employment overseas, finding ways to pay players was not the answer either.

There was a "reasonably strong body of opinion" that players did not want to be paid for playing: "If we pay players, how far do we go?" Gresson asked pertinently. "It would mean the revocation of the amateur regulations and the end of rugby as we know it."

"The players would be under contract and, basically, lose their freedom. We would better to look at a scheme where players are assisted to develop their tertiary education and develop work skills so they have somewhere to go when they finish their rugby."

First things first. Today there is Courage Clubs Championship work at hand and Orrell make their bow in this season's competition, after coming so close to winning last season. They play London Scottish after probably the worst preparation they could have conceived: two defeats

S Africans sharpen their skills

By CHRIS THAU

we haven't got the first division teams which other division teams can draw upon," Burgess said. "So we go to France. We try and spot kids at an early age.

"Why are the Australians able to bring in talent early, at rugby and cricket? They have smaller numbers, they identify good players and give them responsibility and they coach them like hell. We haven't time in our league structure in the north, to develop experience in players so we arrange additional matches and expose players to a higher level of competition than they will get in their clubs.

"We tell everyone we are looking for ball-players. Our game is based upon skill, upon the footballers. The North has a reputation for producing, upon heart and only then on physical presence." Maybe Ardiles, the Argentinian maestro, should take time away from managing West Bromwich Albion and visit Leeds United on November 10, to see the union game at work on a football field.

Williams is more concerned with his own players and how they are prepared to tackle the task. "We have many new players in the side because we must build for the future. Even our veterans are not too well-travelled. However, they are needed to give the youngsters confidence and support."

He added: "We have been working a lot in training here to iron out the shortcomings identified in the internationals against New Zealand and Australia: ball retention, superior continuity and the more dynamic approach."

The captain, and with 25 caps the most experienced international in the side, Nas Botha, confirmed that the weeks spent in the Cape Town training camp had been beneficial. "After the few days we spent in camp together we feel more of a team than before. There is a togetherness which we didn't experience before and that augers well for the tour," he said.

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"We have identified a number of players of potential below national-division level, which we have to do because

Burgess principles

Selkirk to star again in Ascot showpiece

JOHN Reid can benefit from Ray Cochrane's current suspension by winning the valuable Queen Elizabeth II Stakes at Ascot today on Selkirk.

Reid, who won on the big chestnut when he was a two-year-old, need have no qualms about the soft going because the conditions underfoot are now similar to those that Selkirk encountered last year when he beat those stirring fillies, Kooyonga and Shadai, to land today's feature race a first time.

For an encore, he must now deal with two more talented fillies, Marling and All At Sea.

The last time that Selkirk and Marling met there was only a head in it at Goodwood in July, with the verdict going to Marling.

In selecting Selkirk to get his revenge now, I am main-

MANDARIN

MICHAEL PHILLIPS

taining that he was not at his best that day even though he ran a mighty race.

His trainer, Ian Balding, would be the first to concede that it had been a struggle to get him there after problems in June.

In contrast, Selkirk's preparation in the run-up to the Beeefest Celebration Mile at Goodwood at the end of August was trouble-free with the result that he ran out an impressive winner indeed.

Selkirk had been equally popular at Newbury in May when giving the subsequent Queen Anne Stakes winner, Lahib, 5lb and a two-and-a-half length beating.

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In an attempt to get his revenge, Lahib, who has since been a good second in the Prix Jacques le Marois on soft ground at Deauville, now has a pacemaker — Harnas.

In my view, no runner in today's field will be better suited by a strong gallop than Selkirk.

Now that the ground is soft, Pat Eddery remains hopeful that he will go close to winning on All At Sea and with good reason. It was soft in Paris a fortnight ago when she beat the St James's Palace Stakes winner, Big Truce, to capture the Prix du Moulin.

On that occasion Harnas, who just managed to hold the unlucky Marling in the 1,000 Guineas, was third.

That suggests there being precious little between All At Sea and Marling now.

Undeterred, Big Truce has

also stood his ground again, once more accompanied by his pacemaker, Sharp Review.

Last year, Second Set could finish only fourth behind Selkirk. This season, he has been beaten by Lahib at Ascot and by Marling and Selkirk at Goodwood before disappoint-

ment at the Arlington Million in Chicago.

Reid can enjoy a morale-boosting warm-up for his ride on Selkirk by winning the Festival Handicap on Roston North, who was just caught on the line at Doncaster last time out.

His trainer, Richard Han-

non, can go on to complete a

double by winning the Dia-

dem Stakes again at Deauville

on Saturday.

Marling and Selkirk are

the two horses I have

selected for the 8-10-10

selection.

Pat Eddery

RUGBY LEAGUE

New staying power may be seen from St Helens

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

TALK of this being the most open championship season for some years, following an early defeat for Wigan and an impressive start by St Helens, would be all very well except that it is accompanied by an overwhelming sense of *déjà vu*, because everyone knows Wigan will run off with the largest prizes.

The sport needs an effective challenger to Wigan, whose dominance of the last three years has not been good for the health of the game. St Helens flattered to deceive last season until, after some premature obituaries, Wigan sprang back to life at the start of December and never lost another game.

Even so, John Monie, the Wigan coach, acknowledges that damage will inevitably have been caused by a dozen players on summer assignment with Great Britain. At St Helens, the only remaining unbeaten first division club, Mike McClelland has brought strength in depth to a side which seems better placed to match Wigan over the final strides.

"Injuries opened up holes last season which were impossible to fill towards the end," McClelland said yesterday. "We've a better spread of players this season who can operate in a number of positions. With the spirit here, we can put up a more sustained fight."

Should David Lyon come through a late check on a hamstring injury, he will make his home debut against Salford tomorrow at full back in place of Alan Hunte who will revert to the left wing. Gary Connolly, now recovered from an ankle injury, partners the hugely talented Jarrod McCracken in the centre for the final time.

After four consecutive wins, Salford, unchanged from the side that surprisingly beat

Halifax last weekend, will present difficult opposition, unless the St Helens forwards can stifle the creative promptings of the Australian scrum half, Craig Coleman.

Bradford Northern are likely to be without winger Brimah Kebbie because of a stomach strain, but should possess sufficient forward power to subdue an injury-depleted Leeds, unless full back Alan Tait and captain Elfrey Hanley can pass late fitness tests.

Featherstone Rovers yesterday bought hooker Richard Gunn from Leeds for £20,000 and New Zealand prop Wayne Taekata, from Sydney Western Suburbs.

Taekata, Gunn and the club's new Australian scrum-half, Brett Daunt, are all likely to make their debuts in Sunday's league match against Carlisle at Post Office Road.

The league's disciplinary committee has imposed a two-match ban on Oldham's New Zealand player Ivo Ropati, following his sending-off in last Sunday's win over Huddersfield.

Full back Steve Smith, who resumed playing with Batley recently before completing a four-match ban imposed towards the end of last season, has been suspended for a further match and his club fined £50. David Hine, of Highfield, has been suspended for six matches and Kevin Ndlovu, Coventry, for two.

A donkey derby? Shudder the thought. To be fair, players like Ian Crook and Mark Robins, of Norwich, and Kevin Gallacher, of Coventry, will never answer to the name of Eeyore while in John Williams and Peter Ndlovu, Coventry possess two of the fastest things in football boots, as the former proved by winning a national sprint contest for footballers in full kit at Wembley last season.

But both teams, to varying degrees, have sacrificed traditional flair in favour of a more expedient, direct style of play this season. Bobby Gould, as befitting a former Wimbledon manager, has gone unshamefully for route one with his new Coventry charges. Such football is based upon fitness and athleticism and if those qualities are to be key ones this season then you could do worse than have a flutter on the Sky Blues.

After their seasonal flirtation with relegation, which, on this occasion, was not helped by a turnover in managers and injuries to key players, Coventry had their playing staff training on until the end of May. If they thought they had paid their penance they were in for a shock. Gould, picking up the whip from Don Howe, had them back in on July 1 — when most of their fellow

Unlikely lads in the top tussle

BY CLIVE WHITE

WHERE will it all end? That, if they can spare themselves a moment's rational thought, must be the question on the lips of every one of the jubilant supporters of Coventry City and Norwich City as they head today for Highfield Road and what is unbelievably, yet indisputably, the match of the day, if not the season so far.

Who would have guessed during the excitable build-up to a new league which was designed to help the rich get richer and the poor get poorer that two of its least affluent members — who both avoided relegation last season by a single victory — would be occupying positions one and two with almost a quarter of the season gone.

By now, the bubble — a familiar early-season sight — should have been burst. But still the unfancied float on, Norwich with seven wins and a draw, Coventry with six wins and a draw from their nine games apiece. In a season where the physical demands are proving too much for the highly-strung thoroughbreds, it might just turn out to be the workhorses who are first past the post.

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The arch-assistant man: Rosario will try to overcome his former Norwich team-mates

PREMIER LEAGUE

	F	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Newcastle	9	7	1	1	18	11	22
Sheffield	6	6	1	2	11	7	19
Man City	6	5	2	2	15	7	17
QPR	5	4	2	3	11	7	17
Mid'ns	5	4	2	3	11	7	17
Aston Villa	5	3	4	2	14	10	13
Chelsea	5	3	3	3	13	12	13
Everton	5	3	3	3	12	12	13
QPR	5	3	3	3	12	12	13
Ducham	5	3	3	3	12	12	13
Leeds	5	3	3	3	12	12	13
Man City	5	3	3	3	12	12	13
Arsenal	5	3	2	4	11	11	11
Tottenham	5	2	2	4	8	13	10
Sheffield	5	2	2	4	8	13	10
Leicester	5	2	2	4	8	13	10
C Palace	5	2	2	4	8	13	10
Sheld Unit	5	2	2	4	8	13	10
Southampton	5	2	2	4	7	11	9
Wimbledon	5	1	3	5	9	13	6
Notl Forest	5	1	1	6	8	13	4

professionals were still sunning themselves on the beach — and off to an army camp for a spot of camaraderie and character-building.

Ironically, the kind of togetherness which Gould encountered at Wimbledon and seeks to instil at Coventry came naturally at homey Norwich during Robert Rosario's eight years there, without recourse to trips to army camps, fast food bars and public houses. The striker, who is now playing an instrumental role in Coventry's success, used to live on the same Norfolk estate as six or seven other Norwich players and still maintains a friendship with many of them: Jeremy Goss is to be an usher at his wedding next June.

Rosario, who is 26, sees the strides made by his former team-mates as proof that football is about team-play rather than individuals. "When Fleck was sold the supporters there said that the team would go down," he said. "But they've replaced Fleck with Robins and they're a team again. They've always played good football and had capable players. Ian Crook, who is a close friend, is one of the best midfield players in the country. He's just not a very high profile person."

Rosario might, and in fact does, say the same about himself. He accepts that a

scoring ratio of one goal in

almost every seven games is

not the kind of return to get him rave notices. But if assists were recorded in the same

way as in ice hockey, Rosario

would not be found wanting.

"I'm not a prolific scorer, I know I'll never be, but if you asked the players I've played with, from Mick Channon right through to Kevin Gallacher, they would tell you that they're glad they played with me," he said.

After a difficult first season following his £600,000 move from Norwich, Rosario has found his niche in a deeper role which takes him even further away from that elusive target. In the circumstances, he could hardly be blamed for claiming Coventry's goal at Nottingham Forest on Monday when Andy Pearce's free kick gained an arguably crucial deflection off his legs. Even for such a willing second fiddler as Rosario, nothing beats scoring, particularly when it is only your second goal of the season.

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WEEKEND TIMES

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 26 1992

God help the Prince of Wales

While Charles and Diana's problems make headlines, Richard Hough looks to their predecessors for a sense of déjà vu

The London correspondent of a distinguished Italian newspaper asked me the other day: "Is it the end of monarchy?", referring to certain unhappiness among the young. She had come to talk about *Book, Edward and Alexandra*, reasonably enough, wanted to talk about the present Prince and Princess of Wales as much as their predecessors of a century ago.

old her that I was a historian not a royal pundit of today's. But I emphasised that she did tell her readers that nothing going on now was worse than had been in the past. I added that it led to me that the foundations of a monarchy were as stable as at any time in our history.

Imagine, I said, Prince Charles as a witness in a game libel case. Or, again in the denying improper relations the litigant in a divorce case, being booted in public. Imagine, recently, the Prince of Wales going court publicly to an American divorcee and later giving up the ne for her.

It is worth looking at the similarities and dissimilarities between the marriage of our Prince and Princess of Wales today with predecessors of a century ago, for reassurance.

inevitably, the births of both Prince Edward on November 9, 1841 and Prince Charles in Arthur George 107 years five days later were celebrated ferociously up and down the land and, in Bertie's case, appropriately coinciding to the hour with Lord Mayor's Show.

Both princesses suffered the child fate of being forced into a role quite unsuited to their temperament. Bertie, as the family called him, was expected to take his father's place. His mother, in Victoria, wrote that she was relieved he should "resemble his father in every, every act, both in mind and body".

father, Prince Albert, agreed, and that other member of this ideal trinity, the odious Baroness, diplomatist and mentor liberal.

or Bertie there was to be no school, but a greater weight of tuition than any school in the world could impose — seven or a day, six days a week, and no on Sunday either.

his relentless tutors were exhorted to be implacable. The only one he could stand, who exercised pain and begged his parents to let him to Eton, was sacked.



Plus ça change: our Prince and Princess of Wales are suffering no rougher a ride than did Victoria's son Bertie (later Edward VII) and Alexandra, seen here in 1864.

Bertie was heartbroken: he had lost his only friend. Prince Charles should have gone to Eton, too. But, again in the cause of conformity and father emulsion, he was packed off to the athletic and hearty surrounds of Gordonstoun, so relished by Prince Philip in the 1930s.

It was a disastrous decision. The sensitive and vulnerable Charles was bullied mercilessly, "bogged" (head down a flushing lavatory) to such a degree that he was forced as a last resort to pull his rank. Only his grandmother, the Queen Mother, with whom he infrequently stayed, showed any sympathy or understanding. Bobby Chew, the amiable, relaxed headmaster, considered it inappropriate to intervene.

And so it went on. Six months at a sort of Australian Gordonstoun. Timbetraps with outtings to sheep-shearing ("I made rather a mess of it"), and an outward-bound school. The physical activities were ceaseless: "One never seems to stop running here and there for one minute of the day." Then back to another year at Gordonstoun.

The first imperial experience of his great-great-grandfather, Bertie, had been happier. He was sent to Canada to meet the people to lay the cornerstone of Parliament House in Ottawa, and open the mighty Victoria Bridge over the St Lawrence River. He enjoyed a rousing reception and, later in New York, a positively uporous one. According to the president he was "frank, dignified and affable".

Bertie had made a great hit, but Prince Albert dedicated any pretensions he might assume by claiming that his success in Canada "was simply an expression of loyalty to the Queen".

Defeating their sons appears to have been a guiding principle of both Prince Albert and Prince Philip. When he was younger, Charles was often at the receiving end of his father's temper for "monkeying about" in public. Now it is more likely to be for making injudicious speeches, or asides. But

at least Bertie's parents recognised the desirability of an early marriage, if only to prevent a repeat of seduction by an actress. Young Bertie met his 17-year-old future wife when he was 20. "What a pearl!" exclaimed Queen Victoria.

Elizabeth II was no less captivated by Lady Diana Spencer when she first set eyes upon her. The Queen Mother's regard for her has apparently always been much more ambivalent, and it is believed she increasingly blames the Princess of Wales for troubles in her marriage with beloved Charles.

For the Prince of Wales there was a long period of bachelorhood before his marriage, on July 29, 1981. It was not a satisfactory period in his life. He was shy and modest and although there were plenty of women around, he found it difficult to make men friends.

The only real friend Prince Charles had was Lord Mountbatten. Not only a friend, "Uncle



Dickie" was father, mother, confidant, guide and mentor. Charles neither trusted nor confided in Bertie for 40 years of his manhood. It is believed the Queen today is no more willing than her ancestor to share state papers with her eldest son, nor to give him serious training in the skills of monarchy.

Idle hands led Bertie into an inappropriate lifestyle. Even more frequently he visited mistresses in Paris, London's notorious Vauxhall Gardens and baccarat tables, the races, and even fires in the capital with the brigade, his friend Charles Carrington cheering at his side.

At Prince Charles's age today, Bertie had been married for more than 20 years, had enjoyed a number of mistresses and had numerous close men friends.

The problem is that a Prince of Wales's role has never been defined. When should he begin to take serious responsibilities? Queen Victoria once told Lord Clarendon that Bertie "must not see anything

of a very confidential nature". She neither trusted nor confided in Bertie for 40 years of his manhood. It is believed the Queen today is no more willing than her ancestor to share state papers with her eldest son, nor to give him serious training in the skills of monarchy.

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Prince Charles's occupations and enthusiasms have been a great deal more worthy. But, especially since the death of Mountbatten, this lack of an identifiable job within the monarchical structure has led to

unhappiness, a sense of inadequacy and introspection. He apparently receives no more consolation from his wife than did Bertie from Alix for this state of limbo in which he is forced to live.

Conversely, Alix received the equal lack of sympathy from her Prince of Wales after her crippling rheumatic fever as Diana apparently did from her prince over her bulimia nervosa. But the reasons were different. Bertie was too extrovert, unimaginative and selfish to put himself out for the comfort of his wife; Prince Charles was too deeply ingrained with contempt for ill-health and pain. He even underrated the seriousness of Prince William's head injury, accused Diana of making an unnecessary fuss, and headed for the opera from the hospital and then to an environmental study centre in Yorkshire.

Both Princesses of Wales have suffered similar fates in other areas. Alix's mother, Princess Louise of Denmark, was treated with scant courtesy by Queen Victoria, mainly because she did not possess the right sort of German blood. Princess Diana's mother, Mrs Shand-Kydd, has suffered similar neglect and ostracism.

But when the marriage of Bertie and Alix appeared to be on the brink of disaster, and he was booted at race meetings, Queen Victoria remained joyfully supportive of her daughter-in-law. Princess Diana in similar circumstances has not enjoyed such understanding.

Alix sought consolation in her children, grandchildren, friends, dogs and horses, and remained sunny and loved by the people. Diana, whatever her inner turmoil and stress, remains serene in her appearance and demeanour, too. It is significant that both princesses also sought solace in charitable and hospital work. Alix practically ran the London Hospital (and cared tenderly for the Elephant Man). Diana has made her first cause the victims of Aids.

Finally, their looks: both women came to be regarded as the most beautiful of their generation. "The touching tenderness of her girlish, rosebud beauty and graceful figure, as she passed up the nave, her eyes shyly downcast — she was like the vision of a princess in a fairy-tale." That was written by the future Lord Redesdale of Princess Alexandra's wedding, in 1863. It might just as well have been the youthful 6th Baron Redesdale writing in 1981.

You cannot wave away 1,000 years of monarchy, be it occasional turbulent or even scandalous. Today's troubles are no more than a passing hiccup.

• Edward and Alexandra by Richard Hough is published by John Curtis Hodder & Stoughton on October 1 (price £25).

Babbling to out-pink the Floyd

All in all, Levitation are a bold new brick in rock's wall

Pink Floyd for the Nineties? Do we need one? Well, the old one's a bit worn out — I'd do with a lick of paint here, faced tyres there, couple of new gags and so forth. Yeah, I've had a think about it and we definitely could do with one. Definitely, I mean.

And so I give you: Levitation, named from the charred wreckage of several unlikely bands, including reus-performance group called 8 and long-term indie jingle-bangers The House of Love. Pulled together in 1990, Levitation were immediately hailed as something large and wonderful.

o how Levitation feel about Pinking the Floyd? "Well, it's boots," guitarist Christian "Bic" vs says. "Pink Floyd's boots are e boots to fink." Yeah, but itation have got large yet perfectly formed feet.

heir sound, variously described as "psycho-metal-indie babble and "really great", was snapped up Rough Trade, the major independent label that was once home The Smiths. The result was a riddled debut album, *Need Not*.

n past interviews, the band

would sit on the tables or perch excitedly on the edges of their chairs, all talking loudly at the same time in their enthusiasm to get their points across. Today, at this interview, they're a bit more subdued: half the band are ill or abroad, and Levitation only really work as a whole.

Looking at them, it seems as if some celestial ASR man had rummaged through a box marked "band-members", and, just for a laugh, picked out four people with absolutely nothing at all in common, to see how things went.

Dave Francolini, drummer-in-exile, resembles an Ent, those Tolkein creations, half tree and half human. Live on stage, Dave rolls around his kit like a psycho octopus, doing a thousand vaguely impossible things a minute. "He's a lead drummer," Bic says. "Dave's very insecure though; we tell him he's the best drummer in Britain and he doesn't believe it."

As someone very wise once said, it's a game of two halves. Levitation's music may be about "the letting loose of shackles" and wild

extremes — and giddy gester-storm-catharsis; but Levitation's political and social views are more about trying to build a kinder and gentler structure for the future.

"Society has stratified in the past ten years or whatever," Terry Bickers, the band's singer, says. "I'm eating something exceedingly vegetarian and waving his fork around to emphasise certain points. "There's an underclass of people in Britain right now who have no reason to care about what happens. In London they're trying to outlast squatting. There must be fifty, sixty thousand people squatting in London at the moment. If you dislodge them, you're inviting them to riot. It's not as if they've got anything to lose by cutting loose."

Terry is a person with very strong beliefs — and lots of them. "Terry's got religion," one member of the band once said. "Oh yeah, which one? "All of them." Determined from an early age, Terry's always had standards he'll fight for.

When he was six, and on holiday in Germany, a row blew up between a husband and wife in the dining room of the hotel. Terry's family was staying in. Just as the husband started to get nasty, and attempted to hit his wife, Terry leapt up from his chair, hurried himself on to the husband's back, and was thrown through a plate-glass window for his pains. Now, when Levitation fans approach the band for help, Terry will always go

out of his way to aid them. "I think a lot of our early press made us out to be slightly, uh, formidable," Terry says. "But we like to really encourage communication. Backstage after gigs, we like to have debates and arguments, a forum for throwing in new ideas and sources of information."

Drugs, anyone? Rock bands always talk about drugs. "Drugs are stupid," Bic says. "It must be so belittling for a band with druggy reputations about them ... the press always make it out that it's the drugs creating the music. But all our music's us, we don't ... Christ, imagine the drugs taking all the credit." Oh well, no great drug quotes there.

Need For Not seems to have several themes running through it — collapse, imminent Apocalypse. "Financially, society's gonna collapse soon," Bic says. "I mean, it is going to happen. And then insects — bugs — will rule the earth. They're the only things that'll survive the blast. The bugs and Keith Richards. He'll stagger out, saying, 'Where's the gig? there was a bright light and I thought we were out'." Levitation. Ideal nuclear-bunker listening material.

GATEWAY TO THE USA, PAGE 8

Collect the final token for a chance to claim free flights and transatlantic upgrades in our all-American offer to *Times* readers

TIME OFF, PAGE 10

How to look cool when you're in deep water battling with tentacles and air tanks — or just learning to scuba-dive

TREATS, PAGE 11

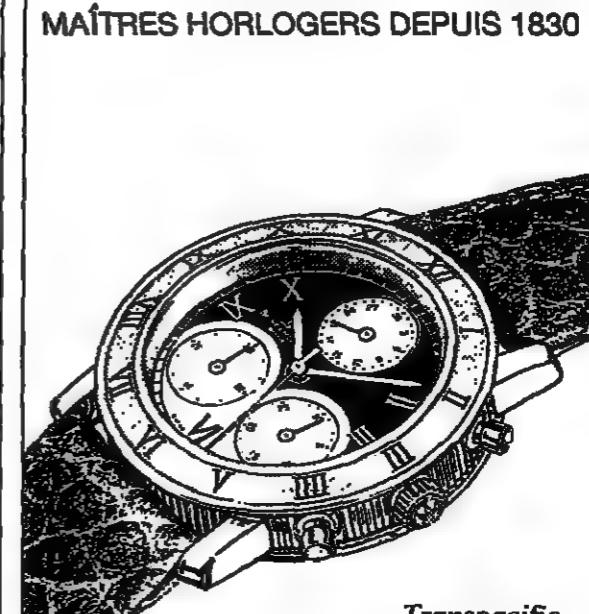
Go on, spoil yourself — from a Turkish bath in Turkey to sex on Sunday, six celebrities indulge their fantasies



Caitlin Moran

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THEATRE

LONDON

THE DARLING FAMILY — A DUEL FOR THREE: Promising-sounding Canadian play by Linda Griffiths about a couple adapting to an unexpected pregnancy. Old Red Lion, 418 St John's Road, EC1 (071-837 8716). Preview Tues, 8pm; opens Wed, 7pm; then Tues-Sun, 8pm.

DEATH AND THE MAIDEN: Ariel Doron's searching psychological drama on the longing for revenge. Penny Downie, Danny Webb and Hugh Ross make up the cast.

Duke of York's, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (071-538 5122). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mats Thurs, 8pm, Sat, 4pm.

FROM A JACK TO A KING: Witty and stylish version of Macbeth's climb to the top, set in the world of "cute bands" and packed with Status Quo. Ambassadors' West Street, London WC2 (071-536 6111). Mon-Thurs, 8.15pm-11pm; Sat, 5.30pm and 8.30pm.



Gavin Evans: from Dogs in Honey (see Nottingham)

AN INSPECTOR CALLS: Stephen Daldry's astonishingly powerful restoration of Priestley's drama of social responsibility. National (Lyttelton), South Bank, SE1 (071-826 2252). Tonight, Mon, Tues, 7.30pm; mats today, Tues, 2.15pm.

IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY: Links in the hospital common room; matron outraged; doctors flummoxed. Ray Cooney fares with lots of laughs. Playhouse, Northumberland Avenue, WC1 (071-839 4401). Mon-Fri, 8pm, Sat, 8.30pm; mat, Thurs, 7pm.

MISOGYNIST: Virtuous performance by Tim Hickey in Michael Harding's corrosive study of an Irishman's loathing of women. A sell-out at Edinburgh. Bush, Shepherds Bush Green, W12 (081-743 3388). Preview Wed, Thurs, 8pm; opens Fri, 7pm; then Mon-Sat, 8pm.

THE OEDIPUS TRILOGY: Six-hour production of the Sophocles tragedies (with an hour meal break after Oedipus Tyrannus) interesting performances, notably by Gerald Murphy and John Shrapnel. Intriguing settings but curiously uninviting. Barbican, Silk Street, EC2 (071-638 8891). Oedipus, Fri, 7.15pm; complete trilogy, next Sat, 4.30pm (enr. 10.45pm).

PEBBLER PICK OF THE FRINGE SEASIDE: Three weeks of goodies from the Edinburgh Fringe. The first week's programme: the ferociously funny *The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband* from the Shelling Beastes (Tues, next Sat, 7.30pm); *Lily Savage*, also ferociously funny in *Savage II — The Return* (Tues, Thurs, next Sat, 9.15pm); Emily Wool's exhilarating adventures sea-changing in Spain. *Sex II* (Wed, Fri, Oct 4, 7.30pm); 1992 Winners Steve Coogan in character with John Thomson present all-too-recognisable modern types (Wed, Fri, Oct 4, 9.15pm). Purcell Room, South Bank, SE1 (071-828 8800).

PHILADELPHIA, HERE I COME!: Brian Frier's affectionate comedy of an Irish emigrant and his carpentry alter ego. Wyndham's Charing Cross Road, WC2 (071-867 1116). Mon-Fri, Sat, 8.15pm; mats Wed, 3pm, Sat, 5pm.

ROMEO AND JULIET: Michael Maloney and Clive Holman in David Llewellyn's fairly ordinary production. Barbican, Silk Street, EC2 (071-638 8891). Tonight, Mon, 7.15pm, mat today, 2pm.

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION: Starring Channing as the rich New Yorker transfigured by a black, con artist in John Guare's fine play. Comedy, Panton Street, SW1 (071-867 1045). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mats Wed, 3pm, Sat, 4pm.

SOMEONE WHO'LL WATCH OVER ME: Excellent playing by Alec McCowen, James McDonald and Stephen Rea as Seamus' houses in Frank McGuinness' new play. Vaudeville, The Strand, WC2 (071-836 9887). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mats, Wed, 2.30pm, Sat, 4pm.

SQUARE ROUNDS: New Tony Harrison 'theatre piece' in verse roasts the inventiveness of machine guns and other tools of slaughter. Performed almost entirely by women. National (Olivier), South Bank, SE1 (071-828 2252). Preview tonight, Mon-Wed, 7.15pm; opens Thurs, 7pm; then in repertory.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED): The Reduced

Shakespeare Company's irreverently comic career through the Bard's works. Arts Theatre, 6 Great Newport Street, London, WC2 (071-838 2132). Mon-Fri, 8pm, Sat, 5.45pm and 8.30pm.

A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE: Philip Prowse's triumphant RSC production. John Carlisle a callous aristocrat in Wilde's social melodrama laced with wit.

Theatre Royal, Haymarket, SW1 (071-930 8800). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Wed, Sat, 2.30pm.

REGIONAL

CARDIFF: Start of Actors Theatre Company's national tour of *Blodeuwedd*, *Woman of Flowers*, the flower-bird creature of love and misadventure, dramatised from the Mabinogion by Saunders Lewis, controversial co-founder of Plaid Cymru. First English-language staging. Sherman Avenue, Senghenydd Road (0222 230451). Opens Wed, 8pm; then Mon-Sat, 8pm.

CHICHESTER: National Theatre's SP-sponsored tour of *Billy Liar* (director Tim Supple). Next stop: Tunbridge Wells Minerva Studio, Oaklands Park (0243 781312). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm.

LEICESTER: Opening week of British tour of *Moulin L'Enfant*, a show performed by Strasbourg's Theatre Jeune Public with 80 exotic instruments (one for each animal), a Max Ernst set and narration recorded by Judi Dench.

Haymarket Studio, Belgrave Gate (0533 539797). Tues-Fri, 10.30am, 1.30pm, next Sat, 10.30am, 8pm, 7.30pm.

NOTTINGHAM: Now '92 festival of arts showcases companies from Poland, Italy, Belgium, USA and the Philippines along with British companies in six weeks of theatre and other arts. New work by Dogs in Honey (Aliens 4), Ralf Lumière & Son, The Cholmondeleys.

Information from Nottingham Playhouse (0602 419419) or Victoria Centre (0602 419741). Festival opens Fri across 13 venues.

OXFORD: The home of musical try-outs stages Leonardo by Greg and Tommy Moeller and Russell Dunlop. Described as "a blend of fact and fiction", with a prominent role for Lisa.

Old Fire Station, 40 George Street (0865 574948). Opens Thurs, 7.30pm, then Tues-Sat, 7.30pm, mat Sat, 4pm.

FILM

LES AMANTS DU PONT NIEUF (18): Leo Carax's hymn to Paris and a punk band's love for a young artist going blind. Terrific in spurs. Denis Lavant, Juliette Binoche.

Information from Nottingham Playhouse (0602 419419) or Victoria Centre (0602 419741). Festival opens Fri across 13 venues.

BOB ROBERTS (15): Lively spoof documentary about a right-wing folk-singer's dirty battle for a seat in the U.S. Senate. Enterpriseing directorial debut by actor Tim Robbins.

Gate (071-727 4043) MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) MGM Tottenham Court Road (071-636 6148) Odeons: Haymarket (0426 915353) Kensington (0426 914666) Screen on the Hill (071-435 3366) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

THE PLAYER (15): Dazzling satire on Hollywood, directed by Robert Altman from Michael Tolkin's novel. Tim Robbins as the studio executive who kills a writer; plus camcass galore.

MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) Mezzanine (0426 915683) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

SECRET FRIENDS (18): Alan Bates cracks up under the strain of writer-director Dennis Potter's sexual obsessions. Horribly tedious; Gina Bellman, Frances Barber, MGM Tottenham Court Road (071-636 6148).

SWOON (18): The Leopold and Loeb murder case, explored from a gay perspective. Highly seductive and stirring first feature by the American video artist Tom Kalin.

Camden Parkway (071-267 7034) Metro (071-377 0757).

UNFORGIVEN (15): Clint Eastwood's mellowed gunman is forced to resurrect his lethal skills. Marvellously resonant, reflective Western. Gene Hackman, Morgan Freeman, Richard Harris.

Camden Plaza (071-485 2443) Empire (071-497 9999) MGM Fulham Road (071-928 2636) MGM Haymarket (071-839 1527).

KRONOS QUARTET: The world's most fashionable string quartet, making its first London appearance for two years, plays a selection of the year's atmospheric pieces, including on its return to the concert hall. The concert is the winner of the 1991 Cardiff Singer of the World competition, USA. Richard Armstrong conducts. London Coliseum, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (071-836 3161), Thurs, 7pm.

ROCK: Rock concert by the Kronos Quartet, premièred at last year's Huddersfield Festival.

Festival Hall, South Bank, London SE1 (071-928 8800), Mon, 7.30pm.

ESPAÑA: In the first of two concerts to commemorate the Columbus anniversary, the Dufay Collective and the Matrix Ensemble join forces for an intriguing mixture of Spanish music ancient and modern (the latter represented by works by Falla and Roberto Gerhard).

Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank, London SE1 (071-928 8800), Tues, 7.45pm.

MY FATHER IS COMING (18): Experiences of a German girl trying

to make it in New York. Sweet, generous, alive to sexual subcultures; directed by German film-maker Monika Treut. Prince Charles (071-437 8181).

PATRIOT GAMES (15): Harrison Ford's family comes under attack from an IRA cell. Absurd thriller from Tom Clancy's novel. Anne Archer, Patrick Bergin; director, Phillip Noyce.

Barbican (071-638 8891) Camden Parkway (071-267 7034) Empire (071-497 9999) MGM Fulham Road (071-928 2636) MGM Haymarket (071-839 1527) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

THEATER

A CHRISTMAS CAROL: Continuing its commitment to popular dance drama, Northern Ballet Theatre presents the world premiere of a production based on Dickens' much-loved tale. The production (sponsored by Digital) brings together the Italian choreographer Massimo Moncione, who was responsible for NBT's successful *Romeo and Juliet*, and the composer Carl Davis, whose idea it was to turn *A Christmas Carol* into ballet. The sets and costumes are by Romeo designer Les Brothman. Tonight's premiere is a gala performance in the presence of Princess Margaret.

Thaxter Royal, Sauchiehall, Bath (0225 448044), tonight, 8pm, Mon-Wed, 7.30pm, Thurs-Sat, 8pm, mat, Wed, next Sat, 2.30pm.

LONDON CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATRE: Having parted ways with artistic director Nancy Duncan earlier this year, LCDT is launching its autumn tour with no successor on the immediate horizon. Still, while its future options continue to be explored, the company is offering a strong programme for its regional tour, with works by Mark Morris and Christopher Bruce receiving their British premières in the next few weeks. The tour opens in Southampton with the world premiere of *My Father's Vertigo*, by the Frankfurt-based choreographer Anna Miller. Mayflower Theatre, Commercial Road, Southampton (0703 229771), Fri, next Sat, 7.30pm, mat next Sun, 2pm.

ROSEMARY LEE: An unusual dance event takes place in the Midlands on Wednesday when Rosemary Lee — a choreographer noted for her site-specific



Birth of a ballet: Lorena Vidal as the Ghost of Christmas Present in *A Christmas Carol*

CLIFF RICHARD: The Peter Pan of pop begins a nationwide tour. A new single, *I Still Believe In You*, is expected to hit the shelves in mid-November in time for the Christmas chart. NEC, Birmingham (021-780 4733). Thurs, Fri, 6.30pm.

BOB GELDOF: The singer embarks on a huge 30-date autumn tour with an upbeat if derivative new album, *The Happy Club*. Octagon, Sheffield (072 7430 9211). Fri, 8pm.

JOE ELY: The country Texas rocker returns with his usual yee-haw swagger and a tasty new album, *Love and Danger*. Irish Centre, Leeds (0532 430887). Thurs, 8pm King Tuts, Glasgow (041-221 5279), Fri, 8pm.

THE PAINTED NUDE: Up until the time of Elty in the early 19th century the nude in Britain generally required an excuse, however transparent, in the shape of a subject from classical myth or a Biblical story. The nude in painting gradually became accepted in its own right and this display at the Tate charts the history of the change from the gallery's own collection.

EMPI: The lively indie dance duo is on the road for its largest tour to date. The decadent popsters *My Life With The Thrill Kill Kult* provide support.

Hummingbird, Birmingham (021-236 4236), tonight, 7.30pm. Event, Brighton (0273 732627), Mon, 7.30pm. Corn Exchange, Cambridge (0223 357851), Tues, 7.30pm. Supper Club, Norwich (0603 505401), Thurs, 7.30pm. Brudenell Social Club, London SW9 (071-236 1022), Fri, 7.30pm.

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Spot the women with balls

Alice Thomson goes channel-hopping in the search for entertaining women in a male-dominated television world



THE week's television was swarming with them: fat and hairy or brawny and smooth, sweaty men were crawling all over our sitting rooms. Absorbing down the curtains, bonding in locker rooms, stuffing rivers down cabinet's throats and proving again and again (*Soldier, Soldier, Civics, Hostages*) that it's a man's world out there beyond the telly diners.

Now, I have nothing against a few writhing male torsos fighting for survival in life's jungle. A little wham-bang action and some terse lines of macho dialogue tend to set sluggish pulses going in the autumn months. *Soldiers*, like policemen, firemen, kidnappers and footballers, make great action television and have proven viewer appeal, but surely the ratings will not plummet if we have a few women among the screeching car tyres.

And by women I do not mean the stereotyped girlfriends, murder victims and knock-down and drag-away imps who just get in the way of male bonding. I mean real women, the kind of women who on their own could entertain you on a Sunday night, and maybe even the kind of women Neil Lyndon dislikes. (Which, for those of you who have managed to avoid the mass publicity for his new book, *No More Sex War*, is every woman who has ever lain awake at night dreaming of burning her bra.)

Having scanned the listings magazines and peered attentively at all the trailers, I couldn't find what I was looking for. Weary of all this male bonding, I started rootling around for old videos of *Cagney and Lacey* and *The Sound of Music* that would give me some more tangible female company.

Strange, it was Dame Edna, or rather her show, that saved me. It was prime-time television at 8.30pm on a Saturday with Dame Edna's *Neighbourhood Watch* (ITV). If women do not make ratings, Dame Edna is doomed with this new series, for she is only the second woman to have enough balls to anchor a game show (Cilla Black was the first). Her entire Dame show is made up of women.

It is not that Dame Edna is particularly polite to the women, in fact she is characteristically rude, but that these women are allowed to be real personalities. The Melbourne megastar has decided to root out the ordinary female psyche. She

TV REVIEW

has taken her cameras into the homes of her female fans to peer and prod into their most private crannies on the premise that you can tell about a woman from her house than from her husband.

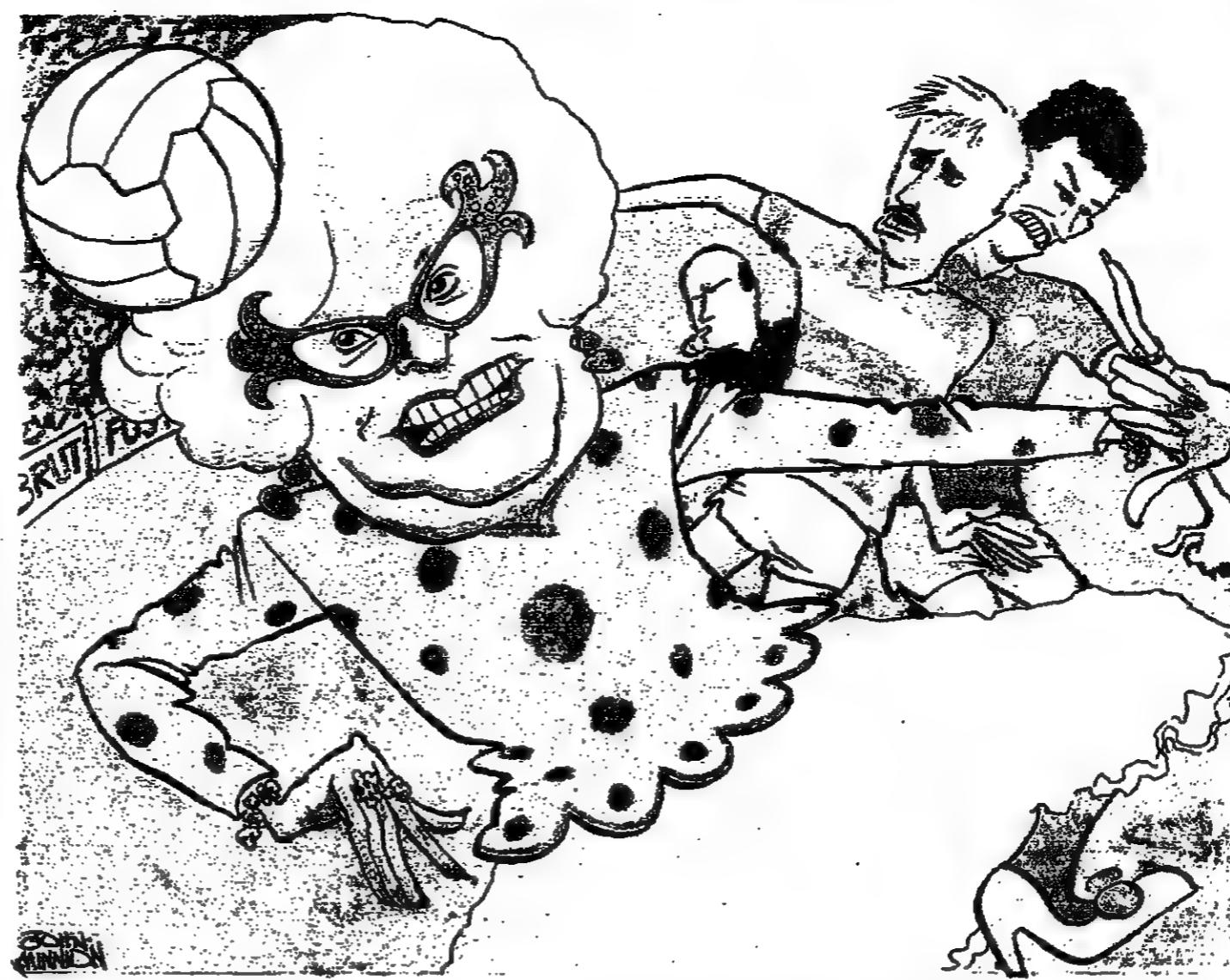
Dame Edna starts by softening up (and feeling) the audience. "Hello, Homebodies," she says, waving her purple possum picker, which she says is like a divining rod for water. "You know those men that go about holding their rods and when they start quivering they know there's moisture underneath?" Hilarious laughter. Well this divines the moisture of my contestants - it's spooky, isn't it?

In two sentences the hen party has lost all its inhibitions and the women have got their peckers up. There are only three contestants, another reason perhaps why we feel we know them by the end - Nelly from Buckinghamshire, Pam from South Ruislip and Linda ("Stand up, Linda, I get a lovely vibration from you"). They are to answer questions on homes. What they do not know is that the programme researchers have been in their homes, padded across their floral carpets, probably drunk a cup of coffee in their kitchens and delved into their make-up bags.

Linda looks gobsmacked when she sees her house on the screen. By the time the camera is at the threshold she doesn't know what to do. She's proud of her house but what if they discover the stale bread in the microwave (they do), ridicule her for eating of bears (they do) or, worse, ask her what the green and white lump on her spice rack is (it is her husband's chewing gum - he doesn't like the minty flavour so the children chew it first and stick it there)? But she is secretly rather pleased that everyone discovers she wears nothing in bed. "Oh, you're wicked," Linda says, but likes feeling she is a little raunchy.

When Pam and Nelly are questioned about their houses, Pam remembers every colour tone (a real nosebody) whereas Nelly is vague (the arty type who uses stencils).

The husband is reduced to an adjunct. The last question the women have to answer is which of three men with funny moustaches is Linda's man. But now that we know he keeps his golf clubs next to his bed we feel he is a character.



Pitched battle: while Dame Edna's new all-women show scored on ITV, *Born Kicking* made a stunning woman into a soccer star

Heartened, I continued my trawl of television and found another woman who looked as if she might have some spunk to her. In among the most pungent and sweatiest of men's worlds, the football club. I found Foxy Roxy, or Roxanne Reddy to be precise. The blurb for Screen One's *Born Kicking* (BBC1) went something like this: a football fairytale; a player emerges as the best young prospect since George Best - 18 years old, tall, strong, physical and with natural ball skills, there's just one problem - this player is a girl.

As a woman in a man's world Roxy did not have to do much for the first half-hour to keep us amused. The mere sight of a woman in club football strip is enough to cause most to smile disbelievingly. When she crossed her hands over her chest to defend a penalty it was instantly amusing. Slowly the advertising hoardings

around the pitch changed. Brut and the *Telegraph* were replaced by *Revlon* and *Cosmopolitan*.

Right from the beginning, when the talent scouts picked her out, you just knew that Roxy would be scoring the winning goal in the cup final for the Swifts. The fun was seeing the way she did it: the early-morning runs over the hills to stirring music, the battle with the Football Association to let women in, scoring with the club chairman then injuring herself doing a hair commercial and falling from grace.

The playing - or rather acting - was inspired, and not just at dribbling. Eve Barker as the stunning Roxanne came across as both vulnerable and determined. Unfortunately, the script did not live up to it. We saw all the obvious effects of being "freak" as her mother calls Roxy, but we never got to grips with how she really felt about being a female football star. And you never

really knew how the men felt about this female intruder. They appeared like Subbuteo figures, placed on the pitch for Roxy to practise with.

The script for the new series of *Soldier, Soldier* (ITV) was more illuminating. Although the first episode was called "A Man's Life" and the two women, girlfriend and new adjutant, were surrounded by young King's Fussiliers who were all "army barmy", the women were allowed to fill out their characters and not just their clothes. This might be because the series has been devised and written by a policewoman, Lucy Gannon.

Second Lieutenant Kate Butler is the kind of girl who was a siren in Brownies and got her Duke of Edinburgh Gold, but not the tweed skirt sort, and the episode (and soon the whole battalion, one surmises)

revolved around her. "Do us a favour and accept that I'm one of the boys," she said as she led a rescue team up a cliff face. "Right, and I'm Squirrel Nutkin," Corporal Paddy Garvey replied.

The grittiest females of all were in *Survival: Chimps - So Like Us* (ITV). Jane Goodall, a zoologist, set out to reveal that the chimpanzee, our closest living relative, is even closer to humans than imagined. Ms Goodall is like one of those feisty Victorian missionaries with long, wispy hair and a beauteous smile. For 30 years she has immersed herself in the jungle studying a group of chimpanzees. While the males go off to fight their tribal squabbles, the females stay at home looking after the children, grooming each other and shaking their heads at the battle cry around them. What they need is the Dame Edna treatment: "Hello, chimp."

• Lynne Truss returns next week.

A.T.

Record reviews: 1960s Johnny Hodges, and the Ashkenazy and Gavrilov piano duet

Majestic sax man is back in the mood

The greatest saxophonists usually generate hordes of imitators, yet you rarely hear anyone attempt to mimic the stately lyricism of Johnny Hodges. Listening to the re-issue of *Everybody Knows Johnny Hodges* (Impulse! GRP 11162) is a reminder of how difficult it would be even to begin to compete with him. Quite apart from that majestic

alto sound, Hodges had the advantage of working with largely the same crew of musicians over many years. The band for these two sessions from the mid-1960s contains most of the best known Duke Ellington stalwarts, with the important exception of the pianist himself. A kind of extra-sensory perception comes into play at this level: each player knows exactly what is required of him. It doesn't matter that many of the tunes are well-established parts of the repertoire. Even the umpteenth run-through of "Mood Indigo" can yield its pleasures, and Hodges adds new and unfamiliar numbers.

The second session was first issued under Lawrence

Brown's name (as *Inspired Abandon*), and the trombonist is on hand with his balled treatment of "Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me".

The album *Spirits Rejoice* (Ogun OGCD101), a celebration of the music of Chris McGregor and the other South African players who settled here almost 30 years ago, is an example of the

problems of blending musicians of differing temperaments. Aimed at financing a bursary for young South African musicians, the album brings together more than 20 London-based performers. Their live concert at the 100 Club on New Year's day was said by some to have been an electrifying occasion.

CLIVE DAVIS

Striking 20-finger exercise of rite

Four hands adore the earth and offer it sacrifices: Vladimir Ashkenazy and Andrei Gavrilov, at their Steinways recreate *The Rite of Spring* in a striking performance of Stravinsky's extraordinary piano duet version (Decca 433 529-2).

What the piece loses in the characterisation of instrumental voices and the orchestral weight behind its lurching meters, it gains in rhythmic clarity and haunting sense of melody. The "Ritual of the Rival Tribes" clashes and confronts, only to dissolve into a single line from the folk memory in "Spring Rounds".

Gavrilov's volatility as a pianist brings out the mercurial side of Ashkenazy to delightful effect in the Concerto for Two Pianos. The little "Nocturno" sees jazz busting in the 18th century. The variations, whose theme peaks up again to set off the final

DECCAMORY ROBERTS

CLASSICAL

fugue, seem improvised on the spot, while the fugue itself builds up a magnificent percussive resonance.

The piece also tackles the simpler Sonata for Two Pianos and enjoys the transcription of the little "Scherzo à la russe", with its imitation of Russian accordions.

The piano becomes a different creature in the hands of Andras Schiff. His new Schubert disc (Decca 430 425-2) is as much a thing of beauty as the Stravinsky is fun. Schiff signs in with a nonchalant "Ungarische Melodie" and audacious "Grazer Galop".

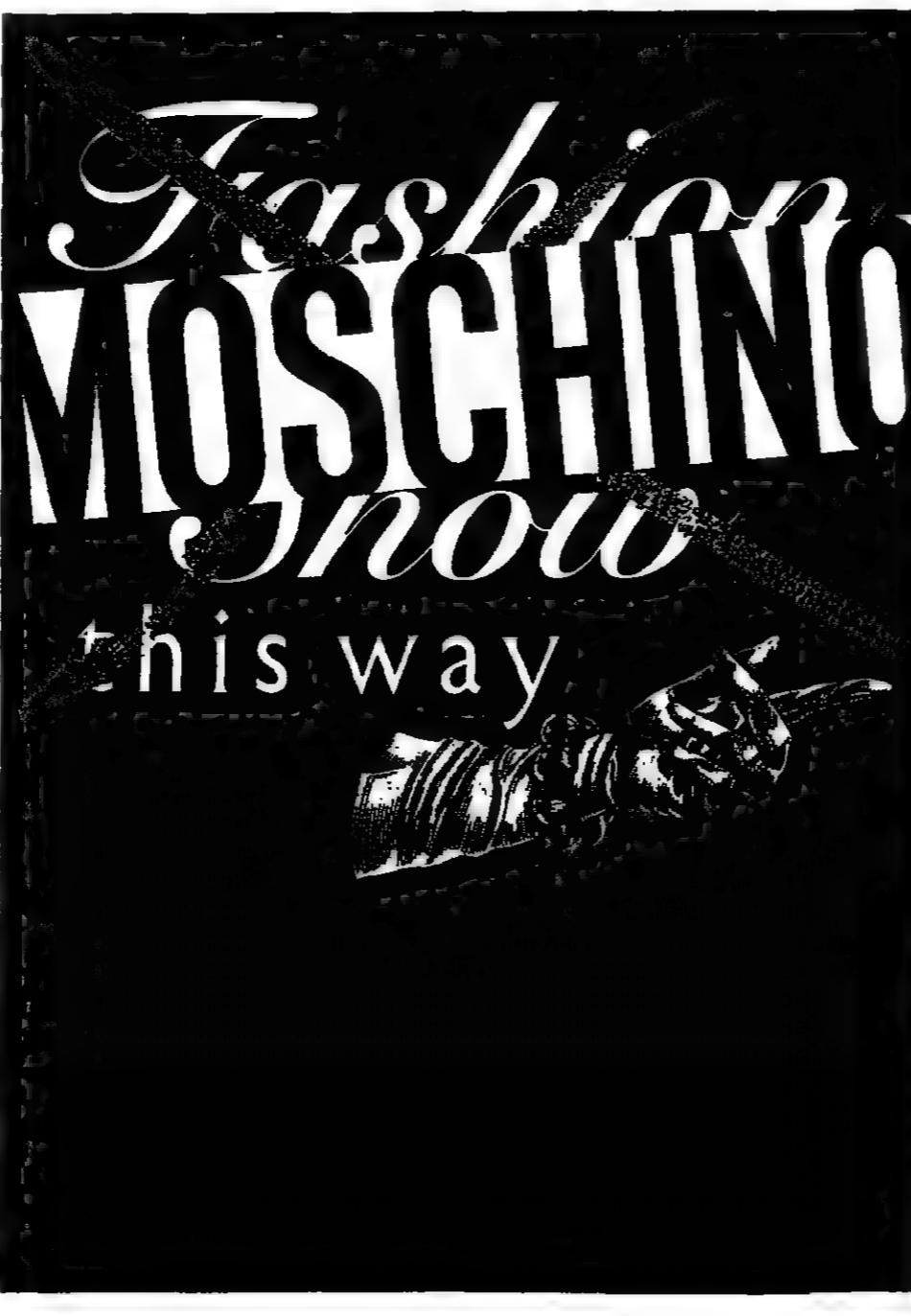
In between come outstanding performances of the impromptus and Moments Musicaux. Schiff recalls the fact that Schubert wrote the first C minor Impromptu in between the two halves of his great song cycle, *Winterreise*, in its vocal quality and its ambivalence of mood, this late winter journey is never far away.

There are wonders, too, in the right hand of the E flat major, wheeling like a summer swallow, and in the great, spreading ripples of the A flat major with its passionate middle section. The extremes of the registers of his Bösendorfer are maintained steadily in tone in this recording.

Six German Dances fold into each other as a blithe interlude before six Moments Musicaux, each one full of insight and many a surprise.

HILARY FINCH

Duo: Vladimir Ashkenazy and Andrei Gavrilov



Franco Moschino is not your run-of-the-mill designer. He once replaced his fashion models with anti-fashion video. He emblazons his clothes with the words "Fashion Victim" and "Born to Shop".

And now, on November 25th, in conjunction with the internationally acclaimed London Symphony Orchestra, Moschino will present his first fashion event in three years. You can see what surprises he's got in store this year

with tickets to the launch of his 1993 Summer Collection reserved exclusively for American Express Gold Cardmembers.

Tickets for the evening, which includes a champagne dinner cost £160, with part of the proceeds going to the London Symphony Orchestra Endowment Trust.

If you like fashion the Moschino way, phone The Gold Card Entertainment Service or see his collection at Harvey Nichols.

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TV PREVIEW

Screen One: *Black and Blue* (BBC1, Sun, 9.25pm)

Another action-packed drama - this time suggesting that corruption is as rampant among cops as it is among robbers. It concerns the murder of a black politician during his investigation into police racism. As a result a naive young black Devonshire bobby, PC Maurice Knight (Christopher John Hall), is brought to work undercover. Although he can barely find his way round London, he somehow manages to track down the killers. Written by G.F. Newman, winner of this year's Bafta Writer's award, with a cast including Martin Shaw, Fain Glen and Don Henderson.

The Velvet Claw: The Rich Man's Table (BBC1, Mon, 8.30pm) Twenty million years ago pioneer hyenas sired a vast dynasty with long, thick necks, sloping bodies and females which look like males. Now only four species are left. One, the aardwolf, survives by gorging on up to 300,000 termites a night. His less attractive cousin, the spotted hyena, is one of the most successful of all carnivores with a vast array of fangs. Even the babies are at it. The first cubs born, after trying to eliminate each other, hash their siblings in gory competitions. Not recommended for vegetarians.

The Big Breakfast (Channel 4, 7-9am, Mon-Fri) This latest attempt at breakfast television is very much a family affair. Paula Yates in frou-frou dresses stays at home in the studio lading out healthy portions of homely tips, while husband Bob Geldof travels round meeting politicians and personalities. Presented by Gabby Roslin and Chris Evans, it positively snaps, crackles and pops. A little too jarring for most sensitive early-risers but worth taping once to get the flavour.

Science Fiction Hair Soap (ITV, Tues and Thurs, Thame, Grampian and HTV Wales) It is hard enough to drink a bowlful of guinea-pig hair extract, but when you know it is going to induce asthma it must be particularly unpleasant. Dr Roger Altounyan was so determined to discover a drug to relieve asthma that he broke all the rules by testing hundreds of compounds on himself after he had drunk the soup. Now his daughter, producer Barbara Altounyan, tells the story of this remarkable human guinea-pig in a drama starring David Suchet. The trials were vital in leading to his discovery of the revolutionary drug Inail, and the Spinhaler, which propels Inail into sufferers' lungs. The doctor died before the film was made, although whether as an effect of his work is not clear.

A.T.

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violin
MARC NEIKRUG
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BACH
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BWV 1016
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Sonata No 6 in A,
Op 30 No 1
NEIKRUG Duo
FRANCK Sonata for
violin and pianoSAT 11 OCT 4.00PM
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TCHAIKOVSKY: Violin Concerto

SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 6

Tickets: £20, £15, £12, £9, £6

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BUDAPEST SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAConductor: ANDRAS LIJETI
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Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto

Mozart Violin Concerto No. 3 in G major

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Wordsmith makes the sparks fly

Poet and playwright Tony Harrison talks to Harry Eyres about his latest piece, *Square Rounds*, at the National

Few poets this century have been so versatile as Tony Harrison — he is a brilliant practitioner in the theatre, on television, sometimes also in the private lyric. Yet this most public of poets complains of solitariness; and you feel that this quintessentially professional and craftsmanlike writer is not entirely at home in any medium, except verse drama in translation.

Harrison seems to feel that his alienation is special. It has to do with class: the bright lad from an inarticulate Leeds background went to grammar school, learnt Greek and became estranged from his family. Harrison feels such a move is a betrayal, but one he cannot entirely avoid. He has left his class behind, but still lives part of the time in the north of England (the rest in Florida and New York).

He writes with virtuosity for the National Theatre (his latest play *Square Rounds* opens on Thursday) and its middle-class audience, but feels he must disconcert that audience by bringing angry havenos (in *Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*) onto the stage. In *V* the poem which stirred Mrs Whitemouse, the Press and some Tory MPs into angry outbursts he tried to understand, and to answer, the rage and protest of the football supporters who had desecrated his parents' graves with graffiti. The trouble is that the havenos in *Trackers* bear little relation to the real people who sleep under the bridges and subways, and the voice of the skinheads in *V* belongs not to them but to bad conscience.

Harrison's most recent work has moved from the insular faultlines of class division to the clashing continental plates of 20th century war. His bitter Gulf War poems, one of which conscripted a charred Iraqi soldier as a mouthpiece, and then used him to dispense a sour, punning humour, were published last year by Bloodaxe Books. His new collection is called *The Gaze of the Gorgon* and contains a varied bag of sonnets, lyrics and longer poems, of which the longest is the eponymous television film-poem, to be broadcast on BBC2 next Saturday.

The Gorgon Medusa becomes an image for the petrifying horrors of the 20th century. For Harrison the Gorgon is a challenge which must face. "It's always been important for me to confront those fires," he says. "I was eight when the war ended and I can remember the celebratory bonfires. I have never

seen people so elated, but I always knew the fires were linked to destruction." In the *Sonnets for August 1945* those celebratory bonfires, which left black scorched circles on the streets of Leeds, are connected to the blinding glare of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

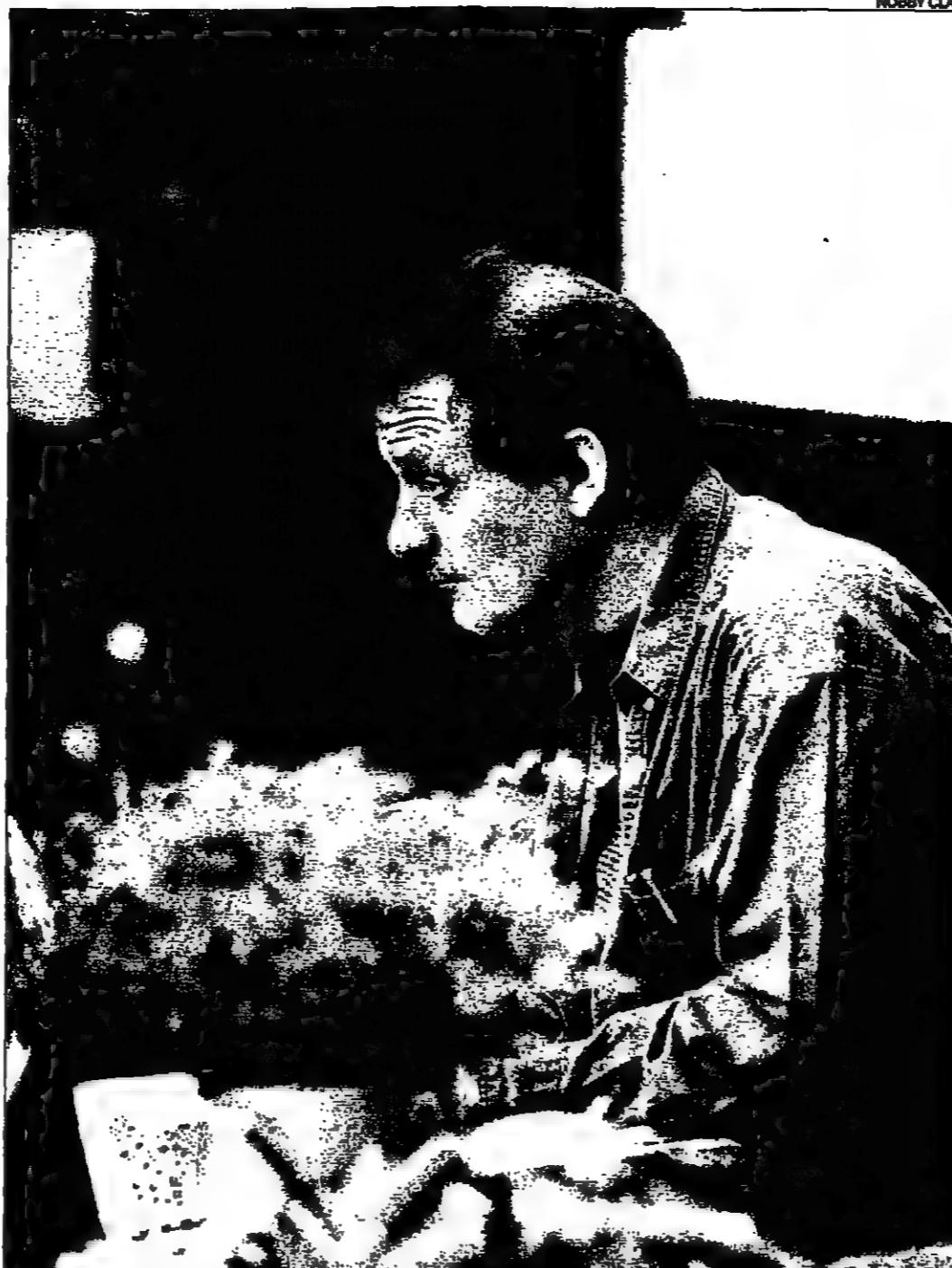
There is a sort of macho bravado in Harrison's fearless stance, and in his high claims for art. He quotes Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* — "Art allows us to gaze into the Gorgon's stare without being turned to stone" — and recalls his delight when recently in Athens he discovered that a great golden Gorgon had been fixed to the back wall of the theatre of Dionysus. "That was what the actors had to look at. You had to do it against that stare."

You might well argue that such bravado is dangerous, if not downright foolhardy. It was only an image of the Gorgon that the actors at the Dionysus faced. When Perseus stalked the real Medusa, he took care to look only at her reflection in his shield. In the directness of their stare Harrison's lines risk being turned to stone.

You often feel that drama poses fewer problems for Harrison than lyric poetry because it is public in its very nature. "I always wanted to write plays, but I felt the route to poetic drama had been blocked by Eliot and Fry, who just wrote conventional drawing-room drama in verse. My instinct was always to be a poet."

It was the 17th century French dramatists who unblocked that route for him, first Molière — Harrison's *Misanthrope* in couples of dazzling, colloquial vigour set a new standard for verse translation — and then Racine his *Phaedra Britannica* brilliantly reimagined the tragedy in the context of the British raj. After that the way was open to the drama which has meant most to Harrison since his schoolboy days, Greek tragedy. The pseudo-Anglo-Saxon neologisms (bloodguzzler, clancie) and the thumping alliterative line may have become too much of a good thing at times, but Harrison's *Orestes* was an extraordinary achievement of coherent style and purpose.

What admirers of those previous National Theatre triumphs will make of his latest play is difficult to predict. *Square Rounds*, read as a text, appears to be a kind of didactic pantomime about the destructive powers of science, featuring the



Harrison at the National Theatre: "My ideal is the shared art of Greek theatre in the open air"

inventors of chlorine gas and the machine gun. "Wait until you see it in performance," urges Harrison. "The visual story is very strong, and the text is only a libretto. As Tarkovsky said, it must be smelted into performance." His caveat deserves respect, for he has proved himself a master librettist in work such as *Yan Tan Tethera* (with music by Harrison's Birtwistle, recently revived by Opera Factory) and *Medea: a sex-war opera*.

Even in the apparently pantomimic *Square Rounds*, Greek drama

is not far away. The piece began as the third part of a trilogy. *The Common Chorus* (as yet unperformed), with Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and Euripides' *Trojan Women*. "My ideal is the shared art of Greek theatre in the open air, to set against the vernacular: dead languages are hardly taught in state schools nowadays."

• *Square Rounds* is in preview and opens at the Olivier on Thursday. *The Gaze of the Gorgon* is published by Bloodaxe Books and forms part of the BBC 2 series *War and Peace*, which starts next Saturday

late, sounds like our greatest upholder of the classical tradition. But that is the kind of contradiction Harrison relishes. Less hearkening is the thought that future Tony Harrisons will not have the Greek to set against the vernacular: dead languages are hardly taught in state schools nowadays.

In that Martland is involved at all with official music-making in Britain, it is through schools projects. "That's the one thing I admire about Maxwell Davies: his educational work," he says. In conjunction with tomorrow night's Festival Hall premiere, he has been working on a project in Islington schools: "I took the schoolkids to

the Imperial War Museum to see the Belsen exhibit."

As educational methods go, that seems a bit of a shock tactic. In fact, it ties in with Martland's *Babi Yar* which, although inspired by Anatoly Kuznetsov's eyewitness account of the death camp outside Kiev, "not specifically about the place Babi Yar but about all such evil-doing: right now it's about Yugoslavia."

The fact that tomorrow night the BBC Symphony Orchestra is playing his huge and extremely noisy *Babi Yar* does not stop him from laying into orchestras generally ("mauvaiseurs") or the BBC. "Radio 3 can't deal with me; they just don't know what the hell I'm talking about," Martland says, adding magnanimously: "But all new things take time to filter through." He pauses momentarily, mentally targeting another vile body. "The London Sinfonia," he opines about Britain's most famous new-music orchestra, "don't play anything new."

He claims not to have had a professional performance in Britain for two years: mostly students and his own Steve Martland Band play his music here. "It is much more productive for me not to be beholden to institutions. The players in big orchestras, for instance, have no say in what they play. I have that. It's much more stimulating to work with friends who positively want to play my music."

Plenty of people outside Britain want to play Martland's music. After leaving Liverpool University in 1981 he had planned to join the Navy. But instead of seeing the world, he decided to hear it. Studying in Holland with Louis Andriessen, he was influenced by the new "post-minimalism" coming from Dutch and American composers, and began to develop his own hard-edged style, as well as close encounters of the right-on kind with avant-garde jazz bands, film-makers and choreographers. "British New Wave" is the tag he now wears, and his albums on fashionable Factory Records have brought him a cult following from outside normal new-music circles.

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Martland wrote the piece in 1983, and it has been well-received abroad. "Both in Holland and America many people loved it at the end," says Martland. "That was very encouraging — getting such a strong reaction." He describes the work as sounding "like a great machine of death: not a political work but a human response to terrible wrong, in the same way as Goya and Beethoven responded."

There will be inevitable comparisons with Shostakovich's *Babi Yar* Symphony, setting Yevushenko's famous poem. After all, that is regarded as one of the great tragic testaments in 20th century music. Do such comparisons worry him? "In honesty, I'd never heard Shostakovich's *Babi Yar*," says Martland breezily. "And I think Yevushenko's poem is second-rate."

Martland regrets that he is "characterised as this aggressive, bitter, arrogant person. I'm not arrogant; I'm just trying to find a different way. And an artist should always live dangerously."

• *Babi Yar* is played by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Andrew Davis at the Festival Hall, South Bank, London SE1 (071-4128 8800) tomorrow at 7.30pm.

Her Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, former prime minister, has just seen the scene of his father's fall. The dashing man now is bent over, worn out, a month after his son's birth. He is a man who goes ahead of politics.

William Mathias did not live to hear the Welsh premiere of his Violin Concerto this week, nor to see the 21st anniversary of his own North Wales Music Festival. He had been racing against time since the spring, and it was a spring full of performances: the Flute Concerto, the *Alleluia* and the new *In Arcadia*, a final orchestral hymn to eternal youth, given a special festival performance here at St Asaph.

Mathias was working on his Fourth Symphony two days before his death in July, and the Violin Concerto resounds with the optimism and drive which propelled his own creative life. It is a heady celebration of song and dance, and, as such, is an apotheosis of the player.

A keening solo violin melody hangs over pools of harp, vibraphone and celeste in the first movement. After a temporary tightening of tension and tempo, it yields once more to its meditative song, but this time in an orchestral nightmare worthy of Bartók. This, after all, is a concerto

tre. And, to the Celtic west, there is the swaying elegy of the third, slow movement, sung out in the dark viola register of the violin, decorated in improvisatory penitential style to harp accompaniment, and then, wonderfully, poised in duet with the oboe.

Both the last and the penultimate movement have testing cadenzas which surface from the simplest of orchestral part writing: in virtuosity lies in Mathias's dramatic timing and in the transparency of his scoring. The first cadenza returns the violin to song, and the last sees it racing the orchestra to the finishing post: surely one of music's most exuberant swan-songs.

HILARY FINCH

Cut out the cabaret

POOR Engelbert Humperdinck. While his fellow Sixties supercrooner Tom Jones attracts new young audiences, "Enge" is still strictly mums-and-dads. His four British concerts are part of a 25th anniversary world tour, after which he will be back on the casino carousel, playing at gambling resort hotels and polishing the gold records.

It is almost 20 years since his last British hit, "Release Me," "There Goes My Everything" and "The Last Waltz" are pub singalong favourites, hence his unfashionableness. Even his new album, *Hello Out There*, features waltz-time, shuffle-along songs recalling his golden years of 1967-72.

He featured several of the (self-penned) new songs at the Albert Hall last Tuesday. The crowd was predominantly middle-aged and overwhelmingly loyal, trotting up to the stage with flowers in relays and gently mobbing the platform at the close, although the sound quality, pacing and presentation of their idol's

concert had been second-rate.

The opening tacky fanfare accurately foreshadowed the misguided cabaret style of the show, heavy on over-rehearsed patter, bad impressions and off-colour jokes. I counted around 30 songs, though half-a-dozen were medleyed at the close and others got no more than a verse and chorus. The proficient nine-piece band and two (excellent) female singers were usually either too loud or badly mixed. Humperdinck's vocals were similarly ill-served, and showed understandable signs of strain, but when he sang "My Funny Valentine" and "Wanted" to musical director Jim Sutcliffe's piano accompaniment the performance moved onto a higher level altogether.

Of the new material, his own "Reach Out" (for children affected by the HIV virus) and "Fiesta Europa" are encouraging signs that, with a little help from radio, he could emulate Tom Jones's recent revival. But he will have to ditch the Vegas/Atlantic City act, lose more weight and find a pop hit. "Achy Breaky Heart," which he sang well on Tuesday, would have been ideal.

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Biting into the big apple

Frances Bissell, the Times cook, presents dishes redolent of the farmers' markets and leading restaurants of New York



IN Manhattan this summer, every chef I met pointed out the Greenmarket in Union Square. As I crossed into the square, I could smell the warm earthiness of newly dug potatoes, the honeyed ripeness of melons and peaches, the pungency and fragrance of freshly picked herbs, garlic, salad stuffs and flowers. It is a wonderful experience. There are none of the mass-market, plastic-bagged fruit and vegetables we often get in Britain as a substitute for locally grown produce.

The produce at the Greenmarket comes from farms in Long Island, New Jersey, Connecticut, Vermont and eastern Pennsylvania. Supplying this kind of outlet in New York City, where there are 26 farmers' markets, keeps small regional family farms in business. Brokers and middlemen are not allowed. Dairy farmers, bee keepers, livestock farmers, maple syrup farmers, all sell their produce here, and much of it is organic.

Fresh basil, Silver Queen corn, lobsters and other fresh fish, blueberries, peaches and many varieties of plums, tomatoes and potatoes were on the stalls.

Certain themes and flavours were evident in what I ate around Manhattan. Deep, dense chocolate is still a favourite. Michael Floran, the pastry chef at the Union Square Café, does a great marble fudge brownie with no chocolate sauce, but his special the day I visited was a chocolate cheese cake. David Bouley, at his eponymous restaurant, does a hot Valrhona chocolate soufflé, and Gray Kunz, of L'Espissane restaurant, a chocolate macadamia nut torte and a chocolate caramel walnut cake.

At Jo Jo's restaurant, Jean Georges Vongerichten makes what he calls a Valrhona chocolate cake. It is more like a rich dark chocolate mousse with just enough flour in it to hold it together sufficiently to bake to a very thin crust when put in the oven; the centre is moist. Today's chocolate crumble recipe is inspired by my New York tastings.

I noticed carrot juice on several menus around the East Coast, used as a cooking medium. Shrimp in spiced carrot juice with Thai lime leaves was offered at Jo Jo's, mignonettes of lamb and eggplant tart in a light curry-carrot juice at L'Espissane, and seafood served in a lightly spiced carrot broth at L'Espissane restaurant in Boston.

Lemon-flavoured herbs, verbena, thyme and lemon grass are popular. Sauces are often no more than

the expressed juices of herbs, such as lovage, chives and tarragon. Arugula or rocket juice is the dressing for a goat cheese and potato terrine at Jo Jo's; Vongerichten uses asparagus juice too; others use celery juice and coriander juice, sometimes cooked, sometimes not. Bouley continues to serve fish with his exquisite tomato water and uses the by-product of 24-hour cooked tomatoes with roasted Cod halibut.

The following recipe is in keeping with today's New York theme:

Smoked haddock with coriander
(serves 4)

4 5-6oz/140-170g fillets of undyed smoked haddock, skinned
1-2tbsp extra virgin olive oil
freshly ground black pepper
1 bunch coriander
1 tsp sea salt
1 small shallot, peeled and finely chopped, optional
1 green chilli, seeded and finely chopped, optional
1-2tbsp extra virgin olive oil

A lidged non-stick sauté or stir-fry pan is best for cooking this dish. The olive oil is not needed for the cooking, but use it as seasoning.

Trim the fish fillets to a neat shape and pick out bones. Brush with some of the olive oil and season lightly with pepper. Wash and dry the coriander, discarding stems and any bruised leaves. Pound herbs, salt, shallot and chilli in a mortar or process briefly in a food processor. Mix in a little more olive oil to bind the mixture. Spread the "chutney" on the top of each fillet. (If you feel there is too much, refrigerate any extra for other uses.) Put the pan over a moderate heat, place the fish in it, chutney side up, cover with a lid, and let the fish sweat in its own juices for 8-10 minutes. Transfer to hot dinner plates. Strain the cooking juices mixed with any remaining olive oil on to the plate.

I AM not sure where the goat's cheese and potato terrine dish originated. David Chambers, of the Oak Room restaurant in Le Méridien hotel, London, had an almost identical version about 18 months ago. It is very good. The tricky thing is to get the potatoes just right. While they should remain firm, they should certainly not be undercooked. This is a useful recipe because it can be prepared while the oven is on for other things. It is then assembled and refrigerated for at least 24 hours. The final stage is to slice it, flour it, and fry on both sides until golden brown, which can be done shortly before serving.



Goat's cheese and potato terrine

(makes 8-10 slices)

2lb/900g large potatoes of even size, such as Romano, Wijla or Maris Piper
1lb/230g melted and strained butter, or clarified butter

1lb/455g goat's cheese, not too fresh
freshly ground pepper

Cut potatoes into square or rectangular blocks, remove any remaining peel and slice about 1/8in/3mm thick. Dry thoroughly and dip each slice in melted butter. Place on a lined or non-stick baking sheet and cook until just done 10-15 minutes in a pre-heated oven at 150C/300F, gas mark 2. The tray should be no higher than the middle of the oven, as the potatoes should cook through but not brown. Remove from oven. Fold in the cheese and work it to a firm paste, with a fork or in the food processor.

Line a terrine or loaf tin with clingfilm, and then with a double layer of potato slices on the bottom and sides. Put a layer of cheese in the bottom and then a double layer of potatoes, more cheese, potatoes, cheese, and then a final layer of potatoes, made by folding over the overlapping slices and filling any gaps with potato slices. Cover with clingfilm, weight down, and refrigerate to set it for 24 hours. When ready to serve, turn out the terrine, slice, flour lightly, and fry on both sides in the remaining butter until golden brown. The dish is very good served with a salad of small leaves with a light herb dressing.

Light salad dressing

(serves 6-8)

1tbsp finely chopped herbs, such as chervil, chives, tarragon and parsley

pinch of salt

freshly ground black pepper

1tsp lemon juice or wine vinegar

2tsp extra virgin olive oil

1/2pt/200ml stock, broth or light gravy

Mix herbs, seasoning, lemon juice (or wine vinegar) and oil to a paste and whisk in the stock.

ALMONDS, hazelnuts, walnuts and pecans work very well in the following crumble recipe.

Chocolate nut crumble

(serves 8)

Pudding

scant 6oz/160g dark chocolate with high cocoa solids content

scant 6oz/160g unsalted butter, cut up and at room temperature

3 free-range eggs: 3 free-range egg yolks

scant 2oz/50g caster sugar

generous 5oz/150g flour

Crumble

2oz/60g flour

2oz/60g ground nuts

3oz/85g unsalted butter, cubed and chilled

2oz/60g chopped nuts

Butter and flour eight 4oz/110g ramekins. Break up chocolate and put in a bowl with butter set over a pan of simmering water. Stir until melted and put to one side. Over the same pan of hot water, place a bowl with the eggs and egg yolks and sugar and beat until pale, thick and fluffy. Fold in flour and chocolate mixture. Spoon into ramekins. Mix flour and nuts, and rub in butter. Stir in sugar and nuts, and spread a layer of crumble over the chocolate. Put ramekins on a tray, and bake at 180C/350F, gas mark 6 for 12-15 minutes. Allow to cool slightly before serving.

Manhattan address book

FOOD SHOPS AND MARKETS

- Balsamic's, Avenue of the Americas (6th Avenue).
- Dean and DeLuca, 560 Broadway (at Prince Street).
- Union Square Greenmarket, 17th and Broadway.
- Zabar's, Broadway at W. 81st. Between 80th and 74th on Broadway you will also find Chiarella's for fish and meat, and the D'Agostino and Fairway food shops.

RESTAURANTS

- Bouley, 165 Duane Street, Tribeca (608 3852).
- L'Espissane, 2 E. 55th in St Regis Sheraton hotel (753 4500).
- Jo Jo's, 160 E. 64th (223 5561).
- Union Square Café, 21 E. 16th St (243 4020). If you're going for lunch, ask to sit at the bar or one of the café tables in the front part of the restaurant.

I give a dinner party for ten people about every three weeks. It's a big number where I can really let rip and make things look beautiful.

People are always coming round for supper on a less formal level too; maybe someone from work, an old friend or my father. In many ways these smaller dinners are preferable because they are more relaxed. I am more relaxed.

I never ask anyone to dinner for business reasons. There might be friends who happen to be in the business or a couple of journalists I like very much, or two designers who were friends before I became a fashion designer. I know people from the film and photography worlds (from the days when I was a model and an actress), and rather like mixing people from the entertainment world with, say, a couple from fashion and another couple who are totally unrelated.

We always eat downstairs in the kitchen; there's such a cozy feeling. It also means you're part of the conversation: I hate dinner parties where the host and hostess keep vanishing; you feel guilty because they are working so hard. In between courses my husband, Dick Polak, helps me remove the dishes and put them in the sink, which fortunately is not very visible. And, of course, everything is tidied away before the guests arrive.

I've been having friends round and cooking for them since I was 17 and living in Budapest. Hungarian food tends to be very unhealthy.

Bubbly mix in the kitchen

ENTERTAINING AT HOME:

EDINA RONAY

1930s and 1940s pottery

picked up from markets, but my dinner plates are modern: those big white French ones with a little blue ring round the edges.

People are invited for 8.30pm — I couldn't possibly

be ready before that. Most don't show up until nine anyway: they're a late lot. We have champagne in the drawing-room when they arrive — one bottle is usually enough because not everyone likes it.

Then, when we go downstairs

to eat, we have white and red wine and lots of mineral water.

As we like to see our friends a lot, I try to keep the cost down. That way we can have more dinners without thinking.

"Oh God, this is costing a fortune".

All the effort goes into the time I spend on the cooking. If you're a good cook you can do fantastic things for very little money. It's a question of using the right herbs and ingredients. If I started buying expensive cuts of meat and expensive fish, such as salmon, perhaps I would not have to spend so much time, but the cost would be astronomical.

I like to spend my money on the fancy things: the wine, the flowers, the Harrods' homemade chocolates, and Italian espresso coffee.

One of my favourite starters is a baby spinach salad, with parmesan and sun-dried tomatoes; very simple and inexpensive. It isn't necessary to spend a fortune on the main course either. If you're having fish, you can have smoked haddock, cod and big prawns. I stew them in sunflower oil with garlic, red and yellow peppers, little chilli peppers, onions, tomatoes and courgettes, and serve it with brown basmati rice.

We usually have three



Smart mixer: Edina Ronay splashes out on the fancy things

Britain passes up the port

Jane MacQuitty decants the good and the bad news about the port trade

The phrase "pass the port" is unlikely to be heard in many British households this autumn. The French, who drink young, cheap tawny port chilled as an aperitif, outstripped our port consumption years ago and even the Belgians, Portuguese and the Dutch drink more of it than we do.

The good news is that although we are drinking less, as with other wines, we are drinking better.

Down from 900,000 cases in 1990 to 800,000 in 1991, port sales have been declining since their 1988 peak. However, the port producers are relieved that while volume is down, value is up. Last year we spent 8 per cent more on port than the year before.

The big switch in our port-passing habits has been the move from the cheap ruby blends, with their peppery, spicy style, to the richer, softer, more mature flavours of superior rubies, including the popular LBV (late-bottled vintage) ports.

Own-label sales, particularly those of supermarkets, have grown dramatically. And almost as many women as men now drink port.

The quality of this fortified wine is likely to improve in the coming years because of the changes taking place in the Douro, the port-producing region in northern Portugal that lies inland from Oporto. Douro farmers are beginning to realize that modern methods of planting and winemaking are often better than archaic tradition.

Encouraged by the European Community, and sponsored by the World Bank, farmers are shifting away from random planting, whereby as many as 70 or 80 varieties are grown in the same vineyard, to separate plots of five top vines: *touriga nacional*, *touriga francesa*, *tinta barroca*, *tinta roriz* and *tinta cao*, each one contributing a specific quality to the final blend. But so far only 2,000 hectares of the Douro's 33,000 hectares of vines have been planted selectively.

What has not changed is the confusion created by the dozens of styles and names port is sold under, many of which sound finer than they really are.

Divided into vintage ports that age in bottle and wood ports that mature in cask, it should be simple to ascertain which is which. Not so. Standard, low-priced ruby and tawny, often made by blending white and red ports, are usually easy to identify. Ports such as the Vintage Character and LBV, despite their grand names, are nothing more than superior rubies aged in cask for rather longer than the cheaper rubies, and thoroughly filtered to avoid sediment.

I feel that the LBV ports made from the better rubies of one year

devalue the vintage ports by quoting a vintage on the label. Ones that do not are traditional LBV, such as Warres '79 (see box) having spent only four years in cask are bottled without being filtered and throw a vintage sediment that needs decanting.

Almost the only way to know if you are drinking a genuine rare old tawny is by price, or by the words 20, 30 or 40-year-old on the label. But be warned: these soft, mellow wines are not made from ports as old as the label suggests, but conform instead to what the port authorities feel is the style of a ten-year-old, 20-year-old, or whatever.

A new arrival in Britain is the *colheita* port, a fine old tawny port aged for at least seven years in the cask and the product of one *colheita* or harvest. But just to confuse us again, these *colheita* tawny ports carry the vintage date on the label.

The only ports that need decanting are crusted ports, single quinta and vintage ports.

True vintage ports are made in great classic years that occur, on average three times a decade. Single quinta ports, like their vintage relatives, are aged for two years in wood before spending the rest of their life maturing in bottle.

The difference between these and vintage ports is that they are made from slightly less impressive vineyards and, instead of being a blend of many different farms, as vintage port is, come from one.

Best buys

• 1986 Dow's LBV, Majestic Wine Warehouses £5.75, Oddbins £6.69.

Rich, chocolatey fruit and a pleasant truffle scent are the hallmarks of this superior LBV.

• 1986 Croft's LBV, The Victoria Wine Company £4.99, Tesco and Gateway £4.49.

Beginner's port: easy drinking, plummy flavours, smoky finish.

• 1984 Calvário Reserve, Oddbins £9.99.

A tawny colour and fine nutty palate make this a classic *colheita*.

• 1979 Warre's Late Bottled Vintage Traditional, Tesco £12.56, Waitrose £13.

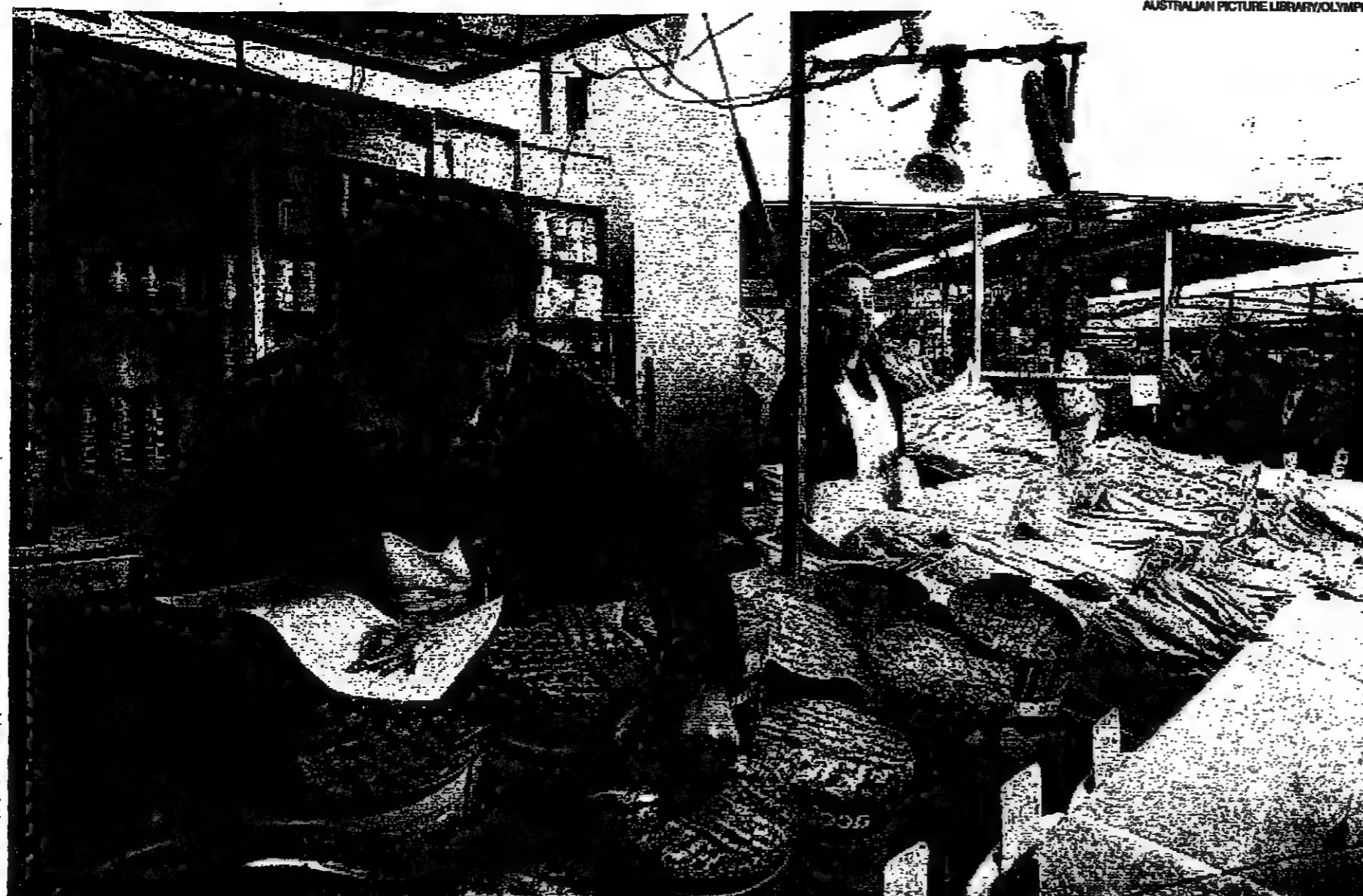
Warre's true LBV has a velvety, blackberry taste and is worth extra money. Needs decanting.

• 1982 Warre's Quinta da Cavadinha, Waitrose £15.75, Oddbins £16.99, Majestic £17.95.

This single quinta is a combination of soft, aromatic fruit and cedar notes. Needs decanting.

• 1980 Dow's Vintage Port, Dow's £18.75, Waitrose £20.

What great vintage ports are all about. A seductive, spicy and sandalwood-scented mouth



Fresh delivery: an abundant supply of fish in Italian markets has inspired creative chefs to experiment with new recipes and build upon the simpler, traditional ones

In a Mediterranean country such as Italy, a peninsula with almost 5,000 miles of coastline, one would imagine the gastronomy to be largely fish-oriented. This is not the case, however, or was not until just a few years ago. Over the centuries the Italians have always had a difficult relationship with the sea, one filled with suspicion and fear. Apart from the unquestionable fondness of the Venetians and the Genoese for navigation and sea trade, Italy's stable populations learnt early that the sea was a constant source of danger, not only from storms but because of frequent raids by Saracen pirates.

Nevertheless, Italian fish cookery does have roots in the past. The breeding of edible fish, in particular moray eels and oysters for the tables of the rich, goes back to Roman times, and the Italians living near the coast have always fished for food. Thus a gastronomic tradition has grown up, its best-known bases being simple grilled versions of the better part of the catch, such as bass and sea bream.

Italian seafood cooking, outside the limited coastal tradition, has only recently come to the fore. This is because of technological advances in refrigeration and shipping, and consumer awareness of the nutritional benefits of a fish-based diet. The well-known fish markets of old — Chioggia and Ancona on the Adriatic, Mazara del Vallo in Sicily, Flumino and Viareggio on the Tyrrhenian — have been far out-classed by the one in Milan, which takes delivery of fresh fish through the night and begins selling it at dawn.

This abundant supply of raw materials has inspired creative chefs to experiment with new dishes and to improve on the old classics. The three traditional

Giorgio Mistretta on a revival of fish dishes in Italy

methods of cooking fish (boiling, frying and grilling) have been joined by steaming, very light braising and light forms of marinating. A modern seafood cuisine has emerged, building mainly on combinations of fish, vegetables and herbs. The result has been the growth of seafood cuisine in the cities of the interior such as Milan, Bergamo and Turin and, in turn, the introduction of these more modern dishes to the coastal areas, where the new dishes have fitted perfectly alongside the old.

While the modern seafood school of cooking favours the so-called prime-quality fish almost exclu-

sively, the traditional one includes ancient recipes that make skillful use of "second-class" or oily fish such as anchovies, sardines and mackerel — the true wealth of the Mediterranean.

Stoccafiso accomodato
(dried cod stewed with tomatoes, golden
raisins and pine nuts)

(serves 6)

In a wide, shallow terracotta pan or skillet combine the oil and garlic, and cook until lightly browned. Add the pieces of cod and season with a pinch or two of salt and a grinding of pepper. Stir in the tomatoes.

Cover the pan and cook gently for about 1½ hours, stirring and adding a little water if the mixture becomes dry. Drain the sultanas and squeeze out excess liquid. Stir the potatoes, sultanas and pine nuts into the fish mixture. By the time the potatoes are cooked, the sauce should be slightly thick and the dish is ready to serve.

● Taken from Giorgio Mistretta's book, *The Italian Gourmet*, published on October 1 by Ebury Press, price £25 (available from bookshops or by mail order on 0279 427203).

salt and freshly ground pepper
3 or 4 ripe tomatoes, peeled, seeded
and chopped
2tbsp sultanas, softened in warm water
2 potatoes, peeled and roughly cubed
2tbsp pine nuts

The pick of Provence

An English chef is importing olives and oils with a fresh French flavour

Provencal olives glistening in oil and piled up in wooden tubs are one of the finest sights of French market life. Less well-known than their Greek, Spanish and Italian kin, their secret lies in the traditional flavouring of *herbes de Provence* and garlic.

Young British chef George Bennell has started a company to transport market-fresh olives and other Provencal products across the Channel. His aim is to keep the resonant Mediterranean flavours with the minimum of preserving.

With a shelf life of just three months, as opposed to the tinned and bottled varieties' two years, his 11 types of olive are already being used in top restaurants and delicatessens around the country.

Also popular with chefs are the fruity extra virgin olive oil from a small-scale co-operative of farmers, and capers of the finest size and texture.

Mr Bennell, aged 24, got the idea for the company when he noticed how guests at his family's house in Villabregues, just north of Arles, were taking home olives from the specialist market stores, where more than 20 types of olive are sold loose by weight. He set up the Fresh Olive Company of Provence, in partnership with a French olive stall owner.

Herbes de Provence, thyme, rosemary and bay leaves gathered wild and sold in the marketplace; butter-soft garlic and chives are used to flavour the black and green olives.

The company also sells the hard, green *picholines* olives, which are harvested early, and the little *équilles* Niçoises, violet-black olives from Nice, which are the traditional ingredient for *salade Niçoise*. The olives cost from 45p-£1.40 a square pound, and the olive oil sells for between £1.20 and £1.5 a litre bottle.

Gary Rhodes, head chef of the 1991 *Times* Restaurant of the Year, the Greenhouse in



An olive branch from France: George Bennell (above) with his 11 different varieties

Mayfair, picks the company's olive oil out of dozens he has tasted. He says: "The extra virgin is sensational. When you make a dressing you just use a trickle and a little bit of seasoning and you don't need anything else. The capers are a beautiful size, and you can taste them and not just vinegar."

Pierre Koffmann of La Tante Claire, SW3, which has two Michelin stars, also uses the company's olive oil and capers. Christian Delteil of L'Arlequin, SW8, another top French restaurant in London, serves the olives. Marco Pierre White of Harvey's, SW17, is reportedly considering the olives for his new restaurant with Michael Caine. The Canteen, which is planned to open in Chelsea Harbour on November 1.

"Our olives are so different

from their tinned brothers that they could almost be a totally different product," Mr Bennell says. "This is really the genuine article."

Firm textures, rich flavours and a natural oil sheen lift these olives above the bottled kind, and demand is proving that there is a market for high-quality, small-scale produce.

Mr Bennell expects a rush on olives as more Britons return from France with a nostalgia for the simple, fresh fare of sun-warmed market stalls and restaurants.

HATTIE ELLIS

● The Fresh Olive Company of Provence can be contacted at 109a Coronation Road, Park Royal, London NW10 7PG (081-956 6193). Mail order is restricted to extra virgin and aromatic oils.

English farmer would be if a French person came over and wanted to import his cheddar."

On the British side, his experience of restaurant kitchens, including as a commis chef in the Michelin-starred Capital Hotel restaurant in Knightsbridge, has helped him to understand the needs of chefs and buyers.

Mr Bennell expects a rush on olives as more Britons return from France with a nostalgia for the simple, fresh fare of sun-warmed market stalls and restaurants.

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Ostrich and two veg?

If farmers can beat the Bambi factor, ostrich will soon be on the British menu

The ostrich is "more of a dinosaur than an alien species", says Francis Ayres, as he leans over the gate at Hangland Farm, and watches seven or eight of his birds stampede past him. Pressed together in a group, they move with a strange, high-stepping gait, their long necks coiling and flexing. They are an incongruous sight in the green fields of rural Oxfordshire. But Mr Ayres claims they are thriving in England; three years after he imported the first ostrich from Namibia, Hangland Farm boasts a flock of 80 birds.

For the first time ever, the ostrich is being farmed for its meat. Once the birds are established on our farms, ostrich meat — rechristened "volaille" — will be launched on the British public.

Although it is in short supply at the moment, demand is good: "We sell some to a very, very high-class market, through personal contacts," says Mr Ayres, a trained architect who came late to farming.

For the next ten years it will be an expensive luxury, but he believes it could become as popular as chicken.

Ostrich meat certainly has its selling points — it is a red meat that tastes like beef, but has less fat and lower cholesterol than even white meat. Persuading people that it constitutes an acceptable meal, however, may be more difficult.

"It's the Bambi factor," says Miriam Parker of the Humane Slaughter Association — "Oh my God, I can't eat Bambi!" Bambi in this case looks more like a feathered pterodactyl than a drowsy fawn, but it still falls outside the category of animals that it is considered acceptable to eat.

Mr Ayres believes the ostrich has many qualities that make it a natural addition to our range of farm animals. It adapts to all kinds of conditions, and will fatten on grass alone. If cared for properly, a pair of adult birds will produce 25 to 30 offspring a year for 40 years, compared to cattle's one a year for eight years.

The ostrich does not look like a great source of meat until it lifts a wing and reveals plump, hairless thighs. It looks like an overgrown chicken, but its brain capacity, even

compared to poultry, is small: "They are the lowest form of life, next to vegetation," Mr Ayres says.

Unlike poultry, however, an ostrich can kick a man to death. It is classified as a dangerous wild animal, but Mr Ayres insists it is rarely aggressive.

In the wild, speed is their main defence: they can run at 45 miles an hour, a fact that has prompted fears that they will have to be farmed intensively in captivity. Mr Ayres says it is simply not possible: he raises six to ten birds to the acre, and claims the ostrich will not breed if it is kept indoors in close quarters with other birds.

Hangland Farm, north of Banbury, is a traditional English smallholding. When Mr Ayres and his wife, Linda, moved there four years ago, they wanted to run the farm organically. They grew thatching straw and kept a team of shire horses, but they found it difficult to make money.

Investing in ostriches was a calculated risk, for ostrich farming is a growing industry worldwide. There are farms in Australia, Canada and Israel, and 3,000 have been set up in America in the last 12 years.

The Ayres take their responsibilities as Britain's pioneering ostrich farmers seriously. Many of their young birds are now sold at £2,500 for a three-month-old pair as breeding stock to farms in Britain and Europe. They have founded the European Ostrich Centre and Registry in an attempt to ensure their own high standards are implemented throughout the industry. They can still pick and choose whom they sell to, and they insist that buyers complete a course in ostrich management.

Mr Ayres admits to having grown fond of his birds. "They've got no brain," he says bluntly, "but they've been here longer than us, and they don't make nuclear waste, so they'll probably be here when we've gone." He watches a group of birds cropping the grass. "Sometimes it makes you wonder if you should be farming them."

EDWARD PLATT

● For further information about ostrich breeding, contact the Ayres on 0295 712204.

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How not to fall off a horse in six days

Maire Nic Suibhne presents a parent's guide to the best and worst types of riding school

My daughter Merlyn pleaded: "Mummy, I'm scared. Take me down." An eight-year-old on a little grey pony, she looked pathetic and vulnerable amid a throng of 30 horses being led around her. She had sat on lots of ponies quite happily in her time, but this was her first experience of a busy working yard: Horetown House, Co. Westford, Ireland.

Riding horses is a high-risk pastime, 20 times more dangerous than motorcycling as a sport. There are 14 fatal accidents in the UK every year, and many falls involving spinal injuries.

The dilemma faced by parents is where can their horse-mad child learn to ride properly?

All over Britain and the Continent two riding centres have mushroomed in the past ten years, catering to the children of the urban middle classes who do not know the difference between a horse and a pampered family pet. Their animals have as much in common with the real thing as My Little Pony has with Desert Orchid.

The sorry customers of these yards are to be found struggling through the countryside, incapable of stopping their mounts from turning round and galloping back to a warm stable. Most of the riders are used to well-mannered horses within the confines of riding schools. They are, however, poor.



ineffective horsemen, with no understanding of the nature of horses. Any animal with a bit of go in it is potentially dangerous. Out of control, a horse weighing more than half a ton is potentially lethal.

You should choose a yard as carefully as your child's school, and at first I could not find a place to inspire confidence. The general atmosphere was of bored staff and shivering parents watching their little darlings trotting round the arena on geriatric ponies, sitting nicely and going nowhere. At best, children taught like this will get bored and give up. At worst, they risk injury, unable to control the animal in a dangerous situation.

If you do not know anything

about horses, the advice of Eric Ellis of the British Horse Society is: "Judge the place by the owner and his or her attitude to children. It should be BHS-approved, which means it is licensed by the local authority and will be insured. Accidents do happen."

In my experience, it is useful to know the standard of riding of the teachers. Do they compete in show-jumping or eventing? A good rider can assess the child's potential.

David and Sarah Young's equestrian centre at Horetown House meets the highest requirements. With a highly qualified staff of riders they teach anyone from the beginner to advanced riders. The approach is that it must be fun and it must be safe. The pupils' response to the body language of the animal is monitored as carefully as their riding, an area ignored in some of the less thorough yards, where a child is put up on a pony for the lesson and hands it back like a bicycle at the end. Knowing how to behave around horses is as vital as a kick can shatter your legs.

Merlyn was kept on the rope for the first day; by the end of the second day she was negotiating her own way through the yard.

The Irish see riding as a way of developing a child's character and building confidence. When I was young, the only instruction I got was I charged across the Irish countryside was: "Hang on there now girl, and remember that most of the brains in the head of the horse."

Happily the methods have improved since my childhood. As a result, Merlyn was to learn as much in six days as her peers elsewhere had managed in 18 months. Merlyn was learning to stay on and give the pony the right signals, and she was mastering another skill: getting it to do what you want, not what it happens to feel like doing. Your life may depend on it.

Rides through the countryside

were a lesson in seeing the world from a horse's point of view. Its survival instincts are to pick up a whiff of danger and run, which can translate into bolting at the sight of a disappearing rabbit or a plastic bag caught in the wind.

On her fourth day, a very wet Merlyn came running in from the yard, shouting: "The pony dumped me in the river; she started pawing the water and then went down on her knees and wanted to roll over. I didn't know what pawing meant, but now I know, and I'll kick her on the next time." By day five she was trotting happily and had managed a bit of cantering. On her final day she was allowed to go over small jumps on her own. Working in the

yard she had picked up several useful tricks and much horselore, and left Horetown House with a great sense of achievement.

My next choice of yard proved a disaster: a small place in Co. Donegal, where the owner wrecked Merlyn's self-confidence in 20 minutes flat. She came away devastated, and lay awake all night thinking she would never again master all the things she had been doing just days before.

Paddy Keirns, a riding instructor, came to the rescue next morning and Merlyn set off for Collooney in Sligo, two counties away. He put her up on Skip Along, a top showjumping pony, and soon she was trotting round, and taking small jumps again.

Now I'm lumbered with a horse-mad child whose sole ambition is to be the first girl to win the Grand National. She also has no idea of her limitations. "I'm not riding any more dopey old ponies," she says. "I want only top-quality animals. They're quicker and nippier, and it's harder to get them to do what you want."

With such high-flying ambitions, we shall do our best to keep her in safe hands in future.

• For a list of British Horse Society yards, phone 0203 696697. British Equestrian Centre, Stoneleigh, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 9LR (0203 696697).

9LR (0203 696697).



Ambitious Merlyn Nic Suibhne, aged eight, wants to be the first woman to win the Grand National

Children's events

LONDON

□ **Broom Room** Reopens. All summer series of children's concerts for seven to 12-year-olds. Today: The Antique Trumpet and Horn Purcell Room, South Bank, London SE1. Today, 3pm (box office 071-928 8007). £1.40, child (who must be accompanied by an adult) £1.

□ **The Real London**. Fun for all the family at Regent's Canal with boat trips, wildlife walks, work shops, music, drama and dance. Battlebridge Basin, New Wharf Road, London N1. Today, noon-5pm.

□ **BAC children's show** The story of the fox and the little red hen. Suitable for five to nine-year-olds. BAC, Lavender Hill, London SW11. Today, 2.30pm. £5.50, child £1.50. Cupboard Club membership £1.50.

NATIONWIDE

□ **Aylesbury special children's weekend**: Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends, free steam-hauled train rides, magic show, theatre, plus Dr Who characters. Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, Quainton, near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP20 9RL. Today, tomorrow 11am-6pm £5, under-16s £3.

□ **Ashby de la Zouch** at war. Soldiers muster for Edward IV's campaign against the French. Ashby de la Zouch castle, Leicestershire LE13 4JZ. Today, tomorrow from 11am. £3, child £1.50.

□ **Bedale Michaelmas Fayre** Heavy horse competition, old-time fairground, clowns and crafts. Manor Farm, Upper Hamble Country Park, Bedale, North Yorkshire (0489 787055). Today, tomorrow 10am-5.30pm. £2, child £1.20.

□ **Enfield harvest-time show** Free children's activities including scarecrow making (take old clothes) and cheese and butter-making. Also heavy horses, threshing demonstrations, countryside competitions. Cupid Manor, Bellswood Lane, Enfield (0992 763840). £4, child £2, family ticket £10.

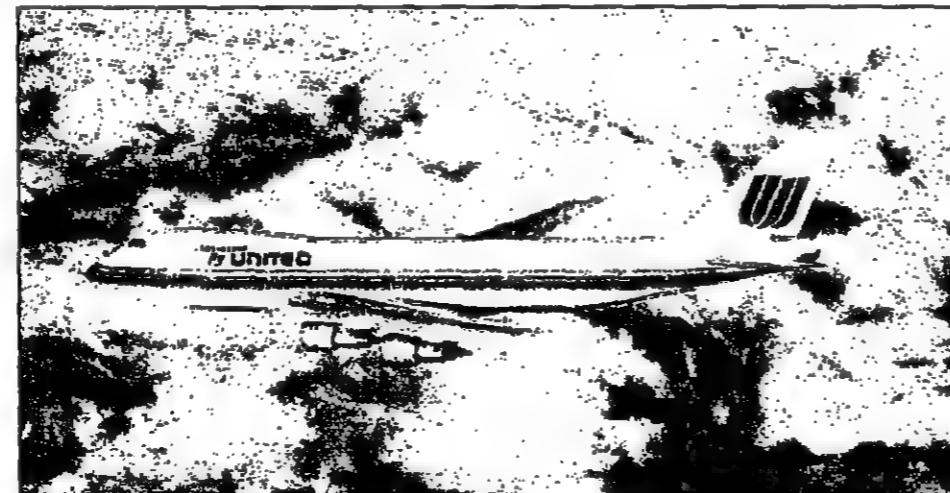
□ **Halifax harvest** Nature walk for all the family looking for tunnels, funnels and nurseries. North Dean Nature Centre, Clay House, Clayhouse Park, Great Harwood, Halifax. Tomorrow, 2pm (0432 350454 ext 248).

□ **Sandling plough day**: Farmers and Morris dancers, harvest songs, horse ploughing, vintage tractors and traction engines. Museum of Kent Life, Lock Lane, Sandling, Maidstone, Kent (0622 763935). Tomorrow, 11am-5pm. £2.40, child £1.20.

JUDY FROSHAUG

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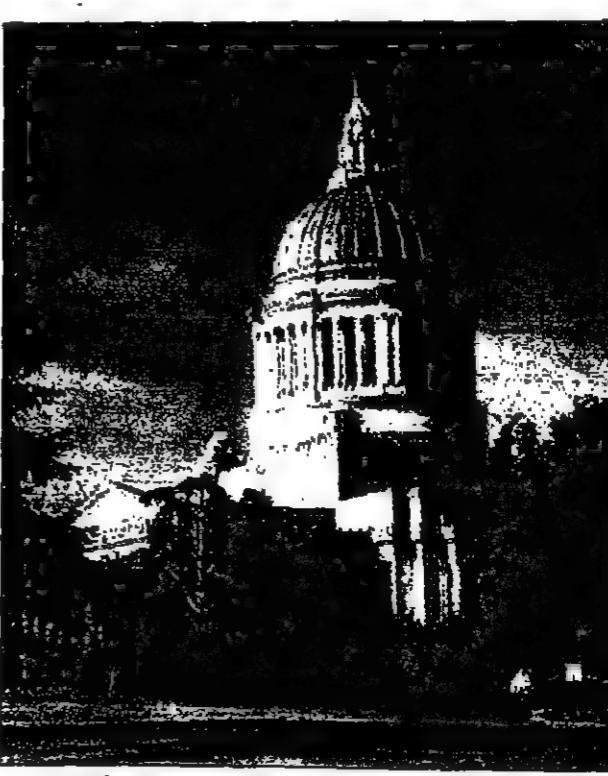
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Looking up at the Capitol: the seat of Congress

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UNITED AIRLINES

All hoofs and hobnails at the boys' big day out

Of the small farmers I have met, there are few to whom the notion of a holiday is not entirely foreign. They do not sit in their tractor-cabs dreaming of Venices they are not forever harbouring wistful thoughts of the Seychelles as they muck out the pigsty. Even if they do manage to drag themselves away for a couple of days, they spend the entire time tortured with thoughts of what might be happening back home.

In this they are quite correct. I am convinced that my stock plan their demise to occur only during my brief absences. I sometimes think they are tapping my phone, and if they ever hear me making a hotel reservation the cattle, sheep and pigs get together and draw straws to decide whose death is most likely to cause me the greatest guilt.

I have come to expect it. Although I leave impeccably responsible people in charge, whenever I

FARMER'S DIARY: PAUL HEINEY

get back from a weekend, the first tool I reach for is the spade.

So how do small farmers ever get a break? The answer is that they only ever leave their farms for the company of other farmers, at events where any guilt is diluted by the notion that the next man in the beer tent is even more fretful.

So last weekend I went on a busman's holiday. You might not think I could derive any pleasure from taking my horses to plough on a modern farm. But this was different, and I am beginning to see that the man who drives the No 47 bus could indeed find complete relaxation in steering the No 85.

Every September, the owners of Suffolk Punch carthorses gather for

what has become known as their Spectacular. It has none of the fierce competitive edge of an agricultural show. It is more of a clan gathering, a thanksgiving for the greatest carthorse in the world. For our farm it has become a work out. Dilly arrived early, wearing his suit. Derek arrived in hobnailed boots, for he could no more plough without hobnails than a guardaman could protect the Queen without a bearskin on. Star and Blue clattered up the ramp of the lorry, and the cheery band headed for the Norfolk Museum of Rural Life traditional working farm.

Although my band of farmworkers have known each other for only a couple of years, we behave with the predictability of aged



married couples. Dilly always asks how the mangels are. I tell them they are fine. He then tells us that in his day they only used to grow four: "One in each corner of the field, and roll 'em home!" We know it's com-

Derek bumped into a man with whom he last farmed in 1945. "What was his name?" I asked. "I don't know," Derek said.

Names do not matter here. I have been ploughing at these events for long enough to be on comradely terms with men whose names and home counties I do not know. We stand at the headland and finish interrupted conversations from the year before. And all the time, eyes of old men blaze with a forgotten fire at the sight of a Suffolk Punch and plough.

We turn the soil at a pedestrian pace: horses are eyed up and down, breath drawn sharply inwards at the sight of some of them, admiration heaped on others. The spectators sit around on bales of straw.

The commentator exchanges banter with a heckler. "Shh up and get on with it," cries the good-natured old lady. "I'm sorry," replies the man with the micro-

phone, "a lady over there is making such a terrible noise, she seems to have swallowed a chicken bone."

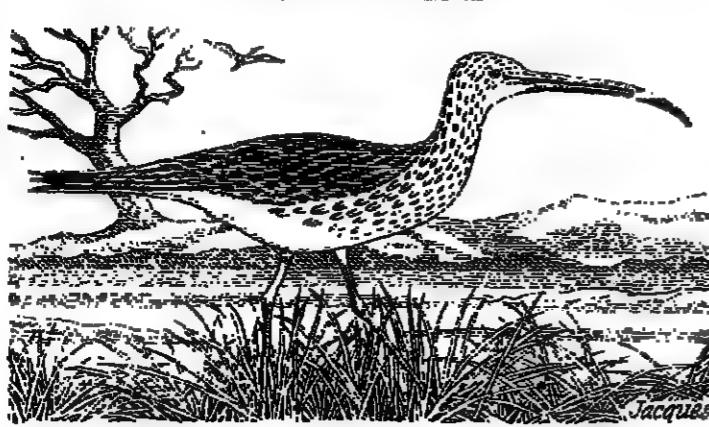
You don't get that sort of wit at Royal Ascot.

Elsewhere, the sheep-tossing competition is reaching its climax, and the man who has been trying to run the terrier-racing promenade will work better next year.

And we have been ploughing slowly and talking much. Phone numbers have been exchanged, secret intelligence on the whereabouts of a share for a Ransomes semi-digger plough has been gathered. And by the time the horses are clattering their weary way up the lorry ramp we are ready for home. Dilly asks how the mangels are.

By the time hoofs and hobnails crunch across the yard it is dark. "How are things?" I ask nervously. "Fine," my wife replies. Good, I think. All hearts on the farm beating satisfactorily. As were ours

Feather report



Biggest in the wader family: the curlew, with its long, curved beak

Beauties at the water's edge

This is the wader month for British birdwatchers. From the curlew, the largest of the family, to the little jacksnipe, waders in their millions are heading south, both overland and down the coasts. Wherever there is sand or mud, they will stop to feed — and that gives the birdwatcher his chance.

To me, curlews are the most haunting of them all. On the Blackwater estuary in Essex, I have often woken in the night and heard their bubbling trills and loud "curlew, curlew", as the tide comes in has dislodged them from a sandbank, and I have imagined them winging away through the darkness. In the morning they are there at the water's edge, probing for small crabs with their long, curved beaks. These are probably birds from the Continent — the adults come first, the young are following them this month. British curlews gather mainly round the estuaries on the west coast.

The other big waders are the godwits — although one autumn day on the Blackwater I saw as even bigger. I was watching some dunlins when my field glasses revealed some gigantic legs. And I found myself staring at a flamingo. Not a true wader, I just add, though certainly wading.

A few black-tailed godwits nest on the Ouse Washes where you can watch them on a summer's day from the hide, beautiful cinnamon-pink birds, stepping elegantly through water. They are also about just off the coast, though many of them are already in their more winter plumage. There are flocks of bar-tailed godwits coming down from the high Arctic, easy to distinguish at first from black-tailed, though their bills are tilted slightly upwards, whereas the black-tailed's even longer bill is straight. It is easier when the birds fly up, since only the black-tailed has a bold, white wing-bar.

Greenshanks prefer muddy inlets among the rocks and are often seen by lonely pools inland. They are wild, shy birds that shoot into the sky with a ringing triple call; but if one can get close, they are beautiful to watch, running fast on their long, green legs, pursuit of shrimps and small fish. The curlew searches with the tip of its beak, but the greenshank uses its eyes.

Golden plover and grey plover are tonic birds, because in summer the former really does have golden plumage and the grey plover (rather meanly named) has a back of bright silver. Grey plover coming

I have not mentioned the noisy redshanks, the dark-plumaged purple sandpipers, the turnstones that toss pebbles over with their beak to look for food, so that they proceed along the beach accompanied by a constant clicking and rattling.

I come back, though, to the jacksnipe. This small bird comes to Britain for the winter, and frequents marshy pools where it feeds among the vegetation. It is very hard to detect, until you notice a strange bobbing movement among the leaves. This is the jacksnipe, going up and down as if on springs, probably to disturb the creatures of the mud and bring them to the surface. Then you see the strange little bird, more like a striped beetle, still vibrating as it shuffles away.

Nothing you would think, could be more different from the dashing greenshank. But it is just as fully fledged a member of the remarkable tribe of waders.

DERWENT MAY

What's about: *Birders — golden plovers* joining flocks of lapwings on farmland. *Twitchers — pallid's grasshopper warbler* on North Ronaldsay, Orkney; short-tailed lark, *Langdown Nature Reserve*, Fife; stone curlew, *rose-coloured starling*, Kening, Mid Glamorgan. Details from Birdline, 0898 700222

True, the dozen new students in this year's intake on the Highland Keepers Course are not called upon to line up and grin toothily on command. But smiling comes under the general heading of etiquette. And etiquette, or plain good manners, is treated as seriously as the ability to lure a salmon to the water or a pointer on the grouse moor.

Geoffrey Minter is the owner of the Sandside estate in Caithness, which has become a 9,500-acre open-air classroom for the two-year course run by Thurso College of Further Education. "The practical side of things has always been well covered," Mr Minter says. "But I felt when I came here two years ago that there was less emphasis on what I call the human element."

Now he has become an unofficial tutor, answering questions about toffs and telling students they will

Getting fat on hardship

Simon Barnes stalks the big cats exploiting Zambia's dry season

Down a crackling line from somewhere deep in the African bush we have received the following report from our man with the cleft report:

The Luangwa River in Zambia is narrower than I have seen it, and gets narrower by the day. The earth is like concrete, the ground vegetation is straw. For the people here times are tough, even if they are still tougher elsewhere in Zambia and Africa. Out in the bush, times are always hard in the dry season, though seldom as bad as this. The ever-slimmer Luangwa flows slowly in front of me as I sit in camp. On the far bank, a group of foxy-red puku antelope come down warily to drink.

Most of the big beasts of the Luangwa valley live by grazing and browsing from the trees and bushes, but there is less and less food about. Every day seems to get tougher for the baby antelope and the buffalo. Hard times for some, but a feast for others. This is the time for carnivores. Most birds here breed and then hang on in the dry conditions, but birds of prey actually breed well in the dry, for this is the time of plenty for them.

For the big cats too, this is the big time of year. The other day we followed a line to some circling vultures and found a pride of 12 lions devouring a buffalo: a flesh mountain, a round ton of meat. A day later they had moved no more than 100 yards, and lay on the ground in an ecstasy of digestion, four paws in the air, round stomachs wobbling. One lioness walked a couple of paces: she was lame.

The smaller birds of the shore include ringed plovers, knots, dunlins and sandpipers. The ringed plovers, neat, short-billed birds with a black collar and headband, stand motionless on the sand, often by stone, and look about them; then they run after an insect and stop again. The other three are sandpipers (like the curlew and the godwit): they haunt the very margin of the water, darning in and out for prey, and are most commonly found in large flocks, astounding in the co-ordination of their movements as they fly.

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TIME OFF

Perfectly exhausting

There is a room at the Lygon Arms called the Charles I suite. It has a four-poster bed, a sitting-room and a secret staircase leading almost all the way to the bar. Charles I is not claimed to have slept in that room, merely to have had a meeting there. Perhaps this shows how history adapts to meet the needs of today's fast-moving business world.

Set plumb in the middle of the high street in Broadway, Worcestershire, the Lygon is a large hotel (65 rooms), doing an excellent impersonation of a much smaller one. Conference suites, a health club and an entire wing of new rooms are positioned unobtrusively.

Our weekend package included quite a lot of rain, which was a pity as the Cotswold Way (Bath to Stratford) is right at the door. I was prepared to walk at least 500 yards of it before reaching a teashop, which, if you avoid the absurdly priced cream teas, is something worth doing.

Despite the chi-chi style which has engulfed Broadway's high street, you can still get proper buns and lunches. However, some parts of Broadway seem to have left reality altogether and become the lid of a biscuit tin. The shops sell antiques, knitwear and pottery cottages. There is a teddy bear museum and no litter and — get this — all the gardens and hanging baskets in the street.

Stephanie Calman takes tea and tarts, fails a fitness test but recovers with a cocktail and croutons in the Cotswolds

have the same flowers in them. The graffiti is tucked down a narrow passage. My fellow traveller found it. "SMASH THE STOAT" he read, a little uncertainly. Actually it said "state", but in such harmonious surroundings the former was more plausible. He eyed the scene. "What this place needs," he said, "is a few new-age travellers."

What it needs, according to the woman I met in the spa bath, is a proper grocer. She told me an ad she had seen for retirement flats described them as "close to cashmere and silver shops".

She lives locally, and joined the Lygon Country Club instead of going abroad. I'd join if I lived there too, once I had got over the trauma of my fitness assessment score. The young chap who did it tried diplomatically to soften the blow. When I fell gasping off the exercise bike, after two minutes instead of six, he suggested the pedals might have been stiff. "No," I insisted. "I am a grown-up: don't spare me." "All right," he said.

WEEKEND BREAKS

— but are, even with the fires lit, tremendously inviting. In the cocktail bar, my partner and I were sipping pre-dinner Grouse on the rocks and trying not to become over-excited by the large dish of almonds and cashews that came with it.

Foolishly and I admit this now, we were seduced by the à la carte. There is a wonderful daily table d'hôte menu included in the weekend price, but no, we had to have guinea fowl with creamed cabbage, bacon and mushrooms, doused with olive oil — as a starter. So by the time we got to the sea bass with prawns in tomato and shellfish gravy for him, and the rack of lamb in parsley and garlic sauce for me, we had gone rather quiet.

My partner, while impressed by the generous portions, was upset by his vegetables. "These aren't potatoes," he said, poking at the tiny cubes. "They are croutons." The beans, he added, were like nail pairings. The fashion here as elsewhere still seems to be for food excessively tampered with.

On the second night we had rib of beef with creamed shallots for two, also à la carte, and pleaded for unglazed boiled potatoes. That with claret, was the kind of supper I dream about, and the kind you feel destined to be served in a room called The Great Hall.

In the hall, two couples were enjoying that other traditional British pastime, the whinge. One kept saying: "If it has a low doorway, I am not having it" — which begs the question, why go to a 450-year-old hotel?

I found my partner in the Inglenook, the 15th-century kitchen whose fireplace is still equipped with the original huge iron cooking implements. Sliding under an ancient clock, its entrails dangling, he had clearly been seduced by the ambience. "When we get home," he told me. "I think we should get some hounds."

The Lygon Arms, Broadway, Worcestershire WR12 7DU (0386 552255, fax 858611). Double rooms from £124, singles from £84, all with private bathroom. Four-poster rooms from £166, family suites £215. Weekend breaks £205 a person for two nights with continental breakfast, table d'hôte both nights, sunbed session and facial or massage, sporting weekend including golf or tennis action, or cycling or riding for the same price. The Lygon Arms accepts children, but not in the club or dining-room after 8pm.

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tries to look cool while learning to scuba-dive off Corsica

SOPHIE DE WILDE



per town. "A good diver is not someone who is strong or very intelligent," M Cridel says, "but cool. That is the secret."

Octopus's garden

G'LIFE

don't do this on the way up or you wind up with a nosebleed, as I did).

Another practical tip: your mask should fit snugly, but if you get water inside the glass, you can evacuate it by lifting your face towards the surface, pinching against top rim of the mask, and snorting vigorously. After that it's mainly psychology, so relax.

The regulator automatically adjusts the pressure of your air to the pressure of the surrounding water. If air is pumped directly from the surface to 10 metres below, where the pressure is twice what it is at sea-level, it will not even inflate your lungs. Conversely, if you shoot back up still breathing air from 40 metres down (five times the surface pressure), your lungs will explode. You have to rise slowly, making decompression stops to let the air out of your blood.

In fact, you do everything slowly underwater. If M Cridel had a criticism of my technique, it was that my movements were a shade energetic. "There is no competition in diving," he said. "You're not going anywhere, you just

being. You do it for yourself, not to beat someone else." You are not supposed to swim, only glide in a manner akin to a slow-motion belly-dancer. M Cridel sang the praises of *equacutie*: "You must be like liquid in the water."

I did eventually find what I was after, or it found me. "My battle with octopus" is how, after meeting M Cridel, I might have pictured the headline, relegating to smaller print, of perhaps omitting altogether, the detail that the creature was a mere six inches across, even with its tentacles fully extended. He popped his head up, winked and waved at me, then shyly ducked back down into a funnel, where he had taken up residence.

This encounter of hominid and cephalopod occurred during my dive to a sunken wreck off Sardinia, an hour out of Berlafaco. Not a galleon holed by buccaneers, but a cargo boat, which was the probable victim of an insurance scam. Twenty years on, it was, I suspected, far more interesting as a wreck than it had ever been as a surface vessel, now carpeted as it was with lawn and flower gardens, pastures where fish safely grazed, its mast a tree, its gangways shady bower punctuated by all quad loudspeakers.

Confounding *Simone de Beauvoir*, who stated that "one is not born a woman, one becomes a woman", the grouper kicks off as a female and eventually ends up male, acquiring a harem along the way.

Merouville is protected as part of the Lavezzi Islands Reserve, but groupers are easy meat to the greediest of all the predators who inhabit these waters, namely Italian Poachers.

"It is better to steal the soul of a fish than to kill it." Such is the philosophy of underwater photographer Sophie de Wilde, whose mother discovered the Cro-Magnon skull. A small woman with red hair lugging around 30 kilos of equipment, Ms de Wilde was researching a book on marine life in the Mediterranean. Her Nikons V camera, with the 15mm lens, sported two elongated flash lights, rather like tentacles.

Ms de Wilde's mission in life is to make the invisible visible: "If people don't see it, they

Unless the visit has been a Cliveden-sized disaster (and Cliveden, too, redeemed itself fully later), I normally introduce myself after I have paid the bill. My children call it showing my sheriff's badge, or "it's the fuzz". I remember the expression on the face of a Brighton hotelier at this moment as he made a rapid replay of our overcooked microwave dinner, the mistake in the account, and the fact that we had been put to unhappy chance, in his worst room.

Visiting hotels may be a busman's holiday, but it would be absurd for me to grumble. After 16 years of editing the guide, I still travel hopefully. Even the truly ghastly experiences have been relished in retrospect. And the other side of the coin is that I have stayed in, and even discovered, an amazing number of inns of happiness.

Hilary Rubinstein is the editor of *The Good Hotel Guide*. The 1993 edition was published yesterday by Macmillan, price £14.99.

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Ullapool (spectacular seascapes); Scilly Isles (spectacular wrecks); Isles (shipwrecks, including the only treasure wreck, HMS Association); The Manacles off the Lizard, Cornwall; the Bolt near Salcombe, Devon; Poole, Dorset (home to one of the major diving schools); Isle of Wight (wrecks); Littlehampton, Sussex (strong on marine life and torpedoed ships); St Abbs, the Farne Islands, Northumbria (where Grace Darling, the lighthouse keeper's daughter, famously rescued many souls from the sinking Forfarshire, which can now be seen several fathoms down).

of a hotel spy

stein has enjoyed
o hide for 16 years

Chagford, today a paragon of country-house hotels, soon after it opened 15 years ago. They had failed to register our booking, and we were apologetically invited to move into a small dark room at the back. It had not been cleaned when we arrived, and three hours later, after we had gone for a walk, it was still in a state of nature. A bulb was missing from one of the lamps. We had been promised a TV set, but it never arrived. Teething troubles would have been a euphe-

mism. I am sure such hiccups never occur these days.

Our first experience of Cliveden — also in its very early days — was an even greater fiasco. A tatty, who showed us to our room, thought to flatter us by making disparaging remarks about the American guests. It was an icy weekend, but the artificial gas fire in our bedroom could not be made to work. We had to wait almost an hour in the Great Hall before being offered a drink and given our order for dinner. Service in the dining-room was atrocious, and the waitress refurbished the management.

Our night was a misery because workmen repairing a skylight outside our window had failed to secure a tarpaulin. And, to cap it all, I was violently sick the next day — although of course that was probably just a coincidence.

1993 TOP TEN

- London hotel of the year: Basil Street Hotel (071-581 3311)
- Newcomer: Howard's House, Teffont Evias (0722 716392)
- Best riverside inn: The Bell Inn, Mousford-on-Thames (0491 651581)
- Welsh country house: The Lake, Llangammarch Wells (05912 202)
- For get-away-from-it-all sophisticates: Summer Isles, Achilliboe (08548 282)
- Irish town house: The Royal, Galway (091 553 76501)
- For reclining with panache the high life of the 1920s: Burgh Island Hotel, Babbacombe (08548 810514)
- Paragon motel: Ram Jam Inn, Street (0780 410776)
- Best budget inn (economy class): The Mill, Hungerford (07687 79659)
- For utterly acceptable mild eccentricity: Fifehouse Inn, Portree, Isle of Skye (0478 2217)

Turkish delights and castles in the sand

TREATS

Sally Brompton
draws out the
people who lead
hectic lives on
how they would
spoil themselves
given a chance

RAUNCHY poet Fiona Pitt-Kethley's treat is a Turkish bath in Turkey (right). "There's nothing like it for making you incredibly clean, and it leaves your skin really soft and silky. I've often had saunas and aromatherapy but this involves a tougher level of massage — they have very strong men doing it..."

"After a 12-hour bus journey, I went to the baths at Selçuk, which only cost about £3. It has a spacious interior with an octagonal marble slab in the middle big enough for a dozen people to lie down on. Up above there is a beautiful dome with lots of little windows, which have the effect of a dazzling starlit sky. My neck was really aching after the journey, and during the massage two loud cracks like pistol shots echoed around the building. After that it was perfectly all right again."

"I also went to the baths at Gallipoli which were around 600 years old and rather poky. The more modern baths — about 300 years old — are better. I was travelling on my own, and the hotel manager insisted on coming along too. As they scrubbed me down with a kind of loofah glove he commented: 'You haven't got much dirt on you. The last English party I brought along here were really filthy.'

WHEN it comes to treats, Lord Christopher Thyne is still drawn towards the delights of childhood (below) — a picnic on the beach on a hot sunny day, a splash in the sea, and the timeless thrill of building a sandcastle — "as long as I don't have to make the picnic or carry the hamper or do the driving. I like to be totally lazy."

Cold waters have their own attractions, so it can be just as interesting to dive in Britain as in Corsica. Old hands reckon the north of Scotland is outstanding, where the water temperature is raised by the Gulf Stream.

One of the hang-ups I had to overcome was the obsession with depth. The deeper the braver, I supposed. I knew that 35 metres was the recommended maximum depth of dive in British waters, so I was amazed at going down that far within a few days. "Depth is not important," M Cridel said. "You can have good experiences at five or ten metres as easily as at 50."

He was equally dismissive of "aquarium-watching" — the "touristic" urge to tick off a record number of creatures sighted. The thing was "to share a milieu which is not ours".

The main difficulty for people like you," M Cridel summed up, "is understanding how easy it is. A good diver is not someone who is strong or very intelligent, but cool. That is the secret."

• Edmond Cridel will man the *Clifftop Afloat* stand at the Dive '92 exhibition at NEC, Birmingham, on November 7-8.



"I would choose a Cornish inlay in a race in Spain. My mother is Cornish and when he handed out the bull-fighting tickets the next day he refused to give me one. The day after that he gave me a ticket in the sun instead of in the shade. After a time I was forgiven because I learnt it was polite occasionally to lose."

BROADCASTER Jonathan Dimbleby opts for a full day of hedonistic pleasure, starting with three hours of hard tennis in the morning.

"Then I'd very much enjoy an aromatherapy session. It would be my ideal treat for my last weekend of freedom, before *On The Record* starts on BBC1 again. Today is my last day of great delight because from tomorrow on, until kingdom come it seems, I have *Any Questions* on Friday, *Any Answers* on Saturday, and *On The Record* on Sunday. I would have aromatherapy because if you have the oils and balms designed to relax you, you're so relaxed that the very idea of getting up from the aromatherapy is almost intolerable, and for two days afterwards you become a complete couch potato."

After that he would host a long lunch at home for close friends including his brother, television presenter David, if he would come. It will be very quiet and informal with quite a lot of celebratory alcohol. I don't mind the menu — Bel [his wife, the writer Bel Mooney] is in charge of the food. I'm in charge of the booze. It sounds a very secular occasion. I grant you, there would be a little champagne...

"And after that, in the evening, I'd sit and read one of Trollope's Barchester novels or, if I'm capable of sustaining the gloom it would produce, I would re-read *Jude the Obscure*. I love Hardy. I was 17 when I first read it and I was aware of how tragic it was, but also of how beautiful."

THE barrister Helena Kennedy's ultimate treat is a long lie-in on a Sunday morning (left) with her husband, Dr Ian Hutchinson, complete with breakfast in bed. With three young children — Keir aged nine, Clio six, and Roland, three — "I feel as though I haven't had a proper night's sleep for about eight years. I always wake up in absolute delight if I haven't had to get up in the night, and if I can enjoy a long lie in without having somebody bound on me in bed."

"It's just such a pleasure to be able to make love, read the papers, drink coffee, all that stuff. Then in the afternoon we could all wander round the local park or go for a swim. That would be a terrific treat."

FORMER ICI chairman Sir John Harvey-Jones's treat is to take his wife to the tea dance at the Ritz. "It's something I've never done, but I love the whole ritual of tea like it used to be, done properly with tiny sandwiches and lots of different sorts of cakes and scones."

"There are so few really good tea shops in England now. If you order a cream tea you just get one stodgy bun, a dollop of cream and a little round jar of jam. I hark back to before the war, when tea was tea."

OPERA singer Maria Ewing longs to escape to a desert island "that no one knows about except me, where I could have complete peace and quiet in my own little world."

She would take with her "a piano and lots of jazz records — Stan Getz, Miles Davis, Oscar Peterson, Fair Waller, Charlie Parker, Art Tatum — and I might take some biographies to read. It's important to take time off to play. It's not really running away, is it? It's just easier to relax away from the telephone and people making demands."

Additional reporting by Sophie Charmer



Civilizations of Old in a Modern Paradise

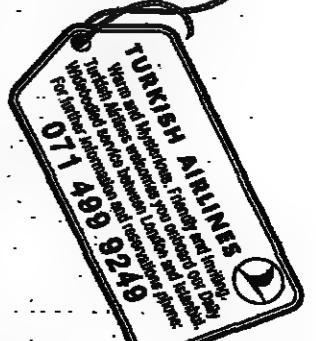
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Queen of hearts and diamonds

Belle Grey trumpets the arrival of Irina Laski's handbag and jewellery collection

ONE advantage of being a dealer in antique jewellery, as Irina Laski knows well, is that you get to handle, even borrow, so many fine pieces.

"It is not like working in a museum or a saleroom," says Ms Laski, whose first designer collection of handbags and jewellery is launched this week. "I was actually able to wear the pieces. I found that, however wonderful it is to look at, not all jewellery works on the body. A brooch may be heavy and fall forward, a necklace might scratch the neck, or a bracelet twist awkwardly. Jewellery must be comfortable to wear."

"I learnt what pieces adapt best to different outfits or moods, and discovered extra details of construction, especially for catches and fastenings. I also realised that the best jewellery is never flat."

Ms Laski started dealing in jewellery in the 1970s from a stall in the King's Road antiques market, Antiquarius, and in 1980 formed Jesse & Laski, in partnership with the pioneer art nouveau dealer John Jesse. From their shop in Kensington Church Street they sold outstanding examples of 20th-century jewellery by Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, Boucheron or Sterlé to international collectors and museums.

Ms Laski was among the first British dealers to appreciate the jewellery of the 1940s. "I've never gone for tiny little pieces," she says. "Forties jewellery makes a statement. It is very bold and dramatic, very colourful with its use of semi-precious stones, and very three-dimensional. I also think its style is well suited to modern living."

Looking around her spacious Chelsea flat, furnished with examples of outrageous English pre-war rococo revival — a chair in the form of silver shells, a chandelier like a

glass fountain and a tapestry with a beribboned pink unicorn prancing over her fireplace — it is easy to comprehend her liking for the visual statement.

Her first designs for jewellery were created for Garrards, the Crown Jewellers, and last Thursday

she showed off her new collection to the press.

"I am very pleased with the

reaction to the collection," she says.

"It is very well received and I am

delighted with the response."

Ms Laski's collection is a mix of

modern and traditional designs.

Her Fanfare collection, with its

hearts, diamonds and celebratory

trumpets, was inspired by the

images of the playing-card char-

acters and the White Rabbit blowing

his trumpet in *Alice's Adventures*

in Wonderland, combined with

ideas of medieval pageantry and

courtly love.

The bold, simple shapes of the

earrings, brooches, pendants, cuff-

links and tie-pins, all in hallmarked

silver-gilt, are softened by the mat

sat finish she has chosen. The

depth and sensual feel of the patina

works especially well with the silken

curls and tassels of the pendants —

a motif perhaps borrowed from the

1940s jewellery she admires.

In addition to the jewellery, there



Irina Laski wears earrings, £270, and leather bangle, £110; handbag (left) £350; clutchbag £220

her Fanfare collection was seen for the first time in a private show of Bruce Oldfield's autumn and winter collections, held in aid of Barnardo's.

The Fanfare collection, with its hearts, diamonds and celebratory trumpets, was inspired by the images of the playing-card characters and the White Rabbit blowing his trumpet in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, combined with ideas of medieval pageantry and courtly love.

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In addition to the jewellery, there

is a range of four leather handbags which represent the playing-card and fanfare motifs. Jesse & Laski was renowned for its regular Christmas shows of such witty and unusual items as glass animals or "Objects in Disguise".

THE focus of one of its earliest Christmas shows was 50 years of handbags, all chosen for their strong shape and design, and the ways in which they reflected their personal

period. "I like handbags which are useful accessories, yet also beautiful enough to sit on my mantelpiece," Ms Laski says. Like her jewellery, her handbags reflect the opportunities she has had to handle fine historical examples. "The feel is very important," she says. "It

mustn't just look right, it must be a pleasure to hold and to use."

As a dealer, Ms Laski developed

an awareness not only of what

words, but of what people buy. She

says she enjoyed developing a range and a theme using elements that can be worn alone or combined. For example, the earrings, brooches and pendants can be worn singly during the day, or linked with larger shapes to create a more dramatic evening effect.

Time will tell whether Ms Laski

has succeeded in her ambition to

create the elusive quality that will

make dealers of the future want to

handle her designs.

• Irina Laski's Fanfare collection of

handbags (priced from £220-£400) and

jewellery (£45-£220), including the inset

trumpet and heart earrings (£235), is

available from Bruce Oldfield, 27

Beauchamp Place, London SW3

(071-584 1363).

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mustn't just look right, it must be a pleasure to hold and to use."

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Starry heights at home

As summer ends and we move back indoors, decor eyesores need to be removed. For a quick re-vamp, try using wallpaper borders, stencils, painting block and friezes.

To make a virtue out of bad joins in wallpaper, form mock paneling by measuring out a rectangle and pasting a border around it. Children's hand marks and other smudges can be hidden under a cluster of golden stars using a stamp kit. A plain wall can be transformed with cut-out prints.

John Dory, an engineer, bought an old house in Dorset that had lumpy walls in need of decorating.

He developed a polymer-rubber stamp on a wood-handled block

and covered his walls with painted gold stars. Friends asked him to make stamps for them, and later he formed the English Stamps Company, which now has more than 40 designs from fleur-de-lis and regal crowns to chess pieces, bunches of fruit and nursery themes. Stamp designs can be made to order.

The company also sells wall paints and fabric paints which can be used to stamp a design round the edges of, say, a plain curtain.

If you want a wall design with an ethnic feel, original Indian blocks with flower, bird and animal motifs are sold at Neal Street East in Covent Garden, central London. Use one block on its own, or choose a couple and print in different colours, one on top of the other, to achieve a more complex design.

To add "antique" style to your room, cut out old prints from magazines or calendars, or even photocopy them from a book. Group the prints or pictures on the wall, paste in place and frame with a suitable border.

To make the sourcing (and snapping) of borders easier the National Trust has published a book of print room borders inspired by examples in some of its properties. The book gives instructions on how to hang prints.

Where grass is greener and sweeter

Francesca Greenoak meets a specialist who proves that uncut grass can make beautiful foliage in any garden

Gardening with grasses is an unperfected art in Britain, confined largely to pampas as formal border edging, and the odd miscanthus in the shrub border.

I fell in love with grasses years ago when I moved into a house in north London which had been unattended for some months, allowing the lawn to reach waist-height. The sun shone through the flowering stems of false oat grass, on the shining heads of crested dog's tail, the dainty poas and benis. They were lovely *en masse* or closely observed with a lens, which reveals the detail of the tiny, beautiful flowers.

Eventually the garden was tamed and the grass reduced to reason, but ever since I have longed to find a way to grow grasses which did not entail wilderness.

The solution came when Trevor Scott, the grass specialist, invited me to see his collection. A former neurologist, trained in careful observation, he left the National Neurological Hospital two years ago and dived into a new career as a nurseryman in northeast Essex, setting out his stock plants in his own garden and starting business in the spring with an evocatively informative catalogue.

It was his imaginative descriptions of plant associations which more than anything tempted me down to the Scott garden. A one-man show, Mr Scott gardens, propagates, does his own mail-order, and welcomes visitors by appointment. It was end of season, and he apologised for the unruly garden. He need not have worried: it was clear at once that this was the inspiration I had been looking for.

Grasses grew like tall sheaves, tasseled or plumed bouquets and shiny-leaved fountains among herbaceous perennials. They should be left uncut for winter and sheared in spring just as the new shoots begin to appear.

• Trevor Scott, Thorpe Park Cottage, Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex CO16 0HN. Catalogue only exists orders this year, but is taking requests for 1993. Those ordering now can take advantage of 1993 prices (cheques are not presented until orders are sent). For a catalogue, please enclose four first-class stamps with your request.

emphasis was on plants which made interesting seed heads to contrast with the grasses through the winter.

Towards the back of a display, the tall, silver-white miscanthus, known as "Silver Feather" (*Stipa* *feather*) grows with the purple hemp agrimony (*Eupatorium maculatum*) "Atropurpureum" and a lovely lemon-yellow helianthus ("Lemon Queen"), spikes of agastache and flat-headed achilleas. The decorative seed heads and stems act as a foil to the bleached winter flower heads of the grass, which vary with the weather.

In front of the group, evening primroses grow with bushy *Phlomis* and the grass *Stipa tenuirostris*, one of the most beautiful of this group of plume grasses, which remains good through the winter, after the orange and yellow autumn foliage has died back.

Mr Scott describes well over 200 grasses and sedges in his catalogue and is growing and evaluating several new kinds. He visits nurseries in Germany and imports seed from New Zealand and Australia, including some which have not been seen before in this country. Many of them were new to me, particularly the ones for compact gardens, the smaller molinias, the coloured sedges with their dense, handsome, soft-coloured foliage.

Most grasses enjoy sun and combine well with herbaceous perennials. They should be left uncut for winter and sheared in spring just as the new shoots begin to appear.

• Trevor Scott, Thorpe Park Cottage, Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex CO16 0HN. Catalogue only exists orders this year, but is taking requests for 1993. Those ordering now can take advantage of 1993 prices (cheques are not presented until orders are sent). For a catalogue, please enclose four first-class stamps with your request.



Observer at grass-roots level: Trevor Scott grows and evaluates several new varieties in his Essex garden

BEST BUYS

A wide choice of spring bulbs is now available, for example dog's-tooth violets, anemones, Star of Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum*), bluebells. Look out for them in garden centres or send off for a special pack, grown at the Suffolk nursery Paradise Centre, of three silver-white *Fritillaria* *verticillata*, three of an exquisite erythronium, the yellow *Erythronium* *Podogon* and ten bulbs of *Ornithogalum nutans*. Sixteen bulbs £10.50 (double pack £20) inc p&p, from Paradise Centre, Twinstead Road, Lamarsh, nr Bures, Suffolk CO8.



Time to buy bulbs: narcissus

WEEKEND TIPS

• Spike over lawns to aerate them and feed with a top-dressing of compost and sand.
 • Eat, dry, stew and freeze or make jam of windfall and damaged apples; store only the perfect fruits.
 • Plant herbaceous perennials over the next few weeks.
 • Plant out spring cabbage.
 • Make sure that climbers are well tied-in, and check that any recently planted shrubs are firmly secured against autumn gales.

MY PERFECT WEEKEND

MALCOLM BRADBURY

Writer

Where would you go? Veliko Turnovo, the ancient capital of Bulgaria and one of the most charming old towns of Eastern Europe. It's a fairytale place dominated by a castle and a spired church on top of the hill. There are old monasteries on the hillside and storks fly around in the valley. It is a university town and I first went there on a British Council lecture tour at the end of the 1970s. Bulgaria has become part of the landscape of my fiction imagination, and I've used it in two novels.

How would you get there? By speedboat down the Danube.

Where would you stay? In an old tavern. The people are poor, so the accommodation is basic. They spend all their time trying to get the sun out so there is an atmosphere of eternal interior gloom.

Who would be your perfect companion? The British Council, to make sure everything goes smoothly. What essential piece of clothing or kit would you take? A briefcase with lectures in it, rather in the hope that for once it didn't have to be used.

What would you have to eat? Something unusual. Knuckle of pig with yoghurt, or goulash with watercress. It is crazy peasant cooking, which can be very good, but also terrible — it's certainly unexpected!

What would you have to drink? Bulgarian red, chosen with local advice.

Which books would you take to read? *The Danube* by Claudio Magris, a wonderful meditation on the borders of Europe and the passage between Europe and the East.

What music would you listen to? Smetana, Kodály and Dvořák. What would you watch on television? Anything but Bulgarian television itself.

What film would you watch? *The Go-Between* to remind me to go home again.

Would you play any sport? No, definitely not. I'm against it.

What luxury would you take? My wife, Elizabeth. I travel a lot but she hates going abroad, so to have her with me would be a luxury.



What piece of art would you like to have there? A few small pieces by Chagall.

Would you be your least welcome guest? Another writer in the next room.

Which newspapers or journals would you read? The Economist, for its international sagacity.

What three things would you leave behind? The telephone, all my unanswered letters and the guilt associated with each.

What three things would you most like to do? Walk round the twisting streets of the old town. Visit the ancient churches. Go to the old merchant town of Arbanassi, with its great Turkish-style mansions and its monastic church, which has some of the finest frescoes of Christendom.

To whom would you send a postcard? My two sons, Matthew and Dominic, reminding them to keep life going in my absence.

What souvenir would you bring home? As much pipe tobacco as was legal. Bulgaria is one of those countries where everyone smokes themselves to death. The fields are full of tobacco and you get all sorts of strange, if not wonderful, smokes.

What would you like to find when you got home? Economic recovery.

Interview by Rosanna Greenstreet

• Professor Bradbury's latest novel is *Dr Criminal*, published by Secker and Warburg (£14.99).

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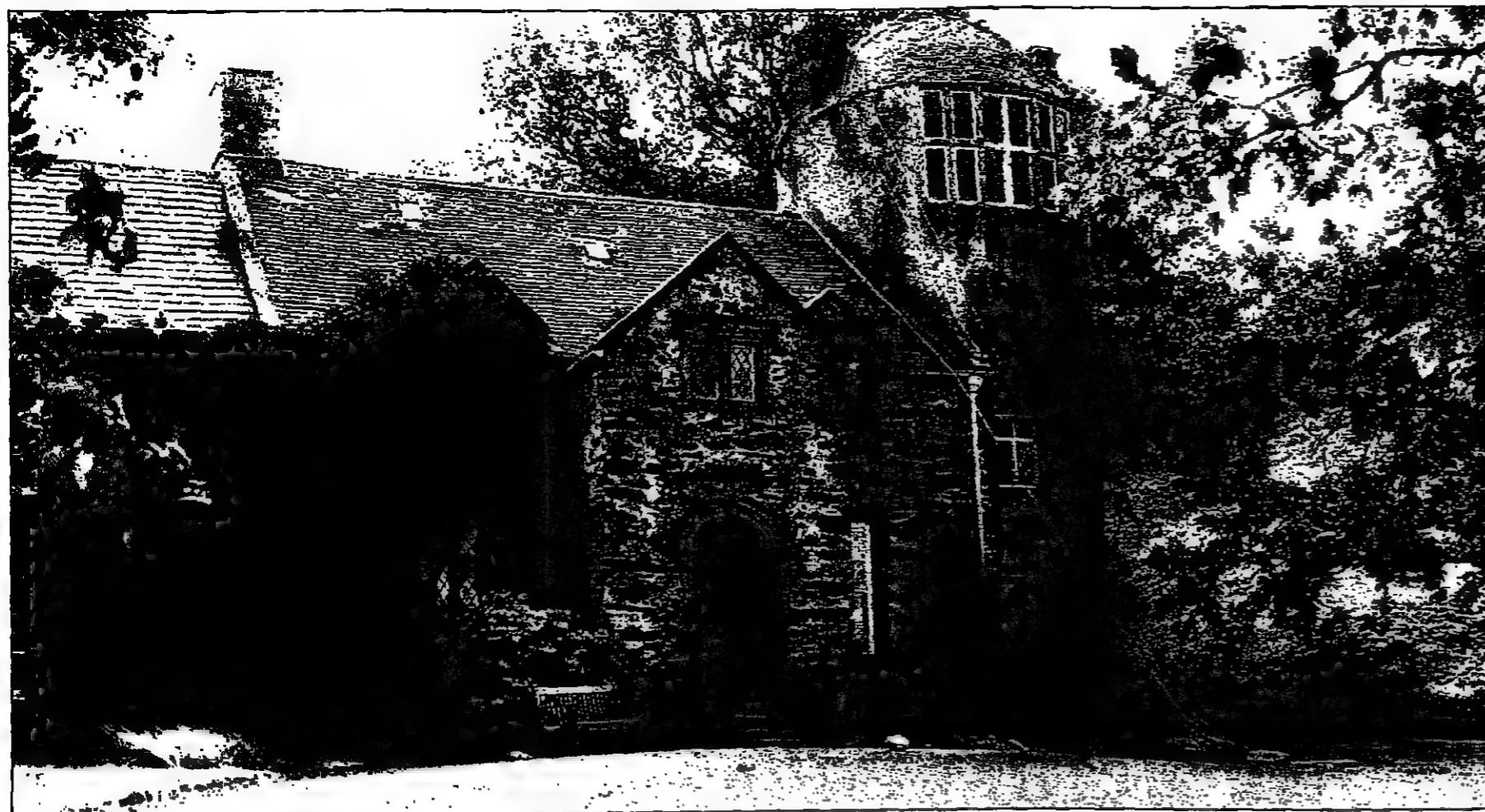
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Ancient monument: Pen y Bryn, called Llewelyn's tower by the locals, is slowly yielding its secrets; right, Kathryn and Brian Pritchard Gibson watch as amateur archaeologist Gabriel Wick, a family friend, investigates the foundations

Kathryn Pritchard Gibson came, breathless, to the telephone. "I was down a hole," she said. "We've discovered another tunnel — and found an urn. Bronze Age, I think. I'm taking it to the museum this afternoon."

This was the latest incident in the extraordinary day-to-day life of Brian and Mrs Pritchard Gibson, who bought a house described by the estate agents as a 17th-century manor with five bedrooms north Wales, but which has turned out to be a palace built in 1211, the home of the last Welsh princes.

When the family moved to the house from a modern one in Chester four years ago, they knew nothing of such secrets and adventures. Admittedly Pen y Bryn looks old, and has a tower. Crouched against the mountainside above the village of Abergwyngregyn, just north of Bangor, it has an eagle's eye view down fields and across the strait to Anglesey. Stone outbuildings and 36 acres went with it. Nobody expected to find more.

But they and their three daughters are now living, as Mrs Pritchard Gibson says, "in the middle of a giant historical jigsaw puzzle". There are hidden rooms, hollow walls, stories of princes, prisoners, lovers and battles, backed up by nearly 1,000 contemporary docu-

A jigsaw house of many periods

The Pritchard Gibsons knew their home was old — but the Bronze Age remains were a surprise. Yvonne Thomas reports

ments for which Mrs Pritchard Gibson has searched archives in the libraries of Europe.

The tunnel might never have been discovered but for a hollow sound to the floor Mrs Pritchard Gibson raised some floorboards, and discovered six steep stone steps leading down into rooms that were 800 years old, with cobbled floors and small blocked-up windows set into 4ft-thick walls. It was just like living in an Enid Blyton adventure story.

"Local people told us they called the house Twr Llewelyn, Llewelyn's tower," Mrs Pritchard Gibson says. "They said, 'That's where the princes lived, and underneath there's a Roman settlement, and underneath that, a Bronze Age settlement, and there's an Iron Age for behind'. It was all passed down, traditional local knowledge, and they were right."

There is no doubt now that Llewelyn the Great lived there with his wife Joan, the daughter of King John, as did his grandson Llewelyn the Last, killed in battle against Edward I in 1282, the same year that his wife Eleanor de Montfort

gained in childbirth. King Edward sent the baby to a mummy, where she stayed until she died 54 years later without ever seeing a man.

It was perhaps in that tower, then roofed with lead (Mrs Pritchard Gibson plans to re-lay it), that Princess Joan was found with her husband's prisoner, William de Braus, in her bedchamber, for which her Norman lover was hanged on the hill beyond.

The tunnel whose entrance is filled with huge stones leads towards the sea. A dowsing has said it goes all the way, about a mile, with passages off. It could have been an escape tunnel for the Welsh princes built in the 1200s, or earlier. "The Romans built tunnels, too," Mrs Pritchard Gibson says.

When there are heavy rains, Roman artefacts are washed down the sloping fields, one a perfect terracotta oil lamp. After they have explored it, the Pritchard-Gibsons will be unblock-

ing the windows to find what further secrets lie behind.

There is an account written by a traveller in 1874 who said he had been down the steps and saw "a cavern with white walls". The rooms are under the 1580 hall, and are part of the original 13th-century long house.

The Royal Commission of Ancient Monuments has declared this the most important historical site found in Wales this century, and of worldwide importance, Mrs Pritchard Gibson says.

"We came here to be quiet," she adds, but is delighted now that events took a different turn. "I'm a historian and I wanted to be near the archives in Bangor to do research. This house was ideal. My husband is an engineer, self-employed, so he can work anywhere, and the position is convenient for the children's schools."

As it turned out, her subject for historical research was right under her feet. It started when she felt a damp wall in her daughter's bedroom, and the wall caved in to reveal a blocked-up Victorian fireplace. Tame enough, considering what followed, but it started the family tapping on walls, and it was not long before they found two huge 16th-century fireplaces, four paces across, in the hall and in the room behind.

Modernisation in 1970 did away with some medieval oak paneling and an oak screen. But bit by bit, with help from her family and friends, Mrs Pritchard Gibson is getting the house back to what it was. It is fortunate for posterity that she and her husband bought the property, because planning permission had already been given to turn a stone "barn" — actually the palace gatehouse and courtyard built in 1211 — into three holiday cottages.

The Pritchard Gibsons have been offered £120,000 for land for holiday accommodation and caravans, for which there would probably be a Wales Tourist Board grant, and a developer offered £40,000 an acre for ten acres to build "starter homes" for young people.

"I said, 'What young people? There aren't any here.' He said: 'That's just a way of getting building permission. You leave it to us and just sell the land.' I'm afraid I was rather rude to him. If we had sold, there would have been a grant for a quick archaeological dig before destroying the site. And the Wales Tourist Board would have given money, too, yet we can't get a grant to save it."

The Pritchard Gibsons have worked out another way. They have formed the Aber Welsh Heritage Trust and presented the barn to the trust so that it is protected. They would have given the house as well, but as it is still mortgaged they cannot. "There are at least 15 years of archaeology to be carried out here, to uncover the great hall where the people who were not in the royal family lived, as well as other sites. And there is research on

the outbuildings and restoration of the main house to be done," Mrs Pritchard Gibson says.

She is now giving free accommodation to ten young archaeologists, who in return are working for nothing. They were picked from numerous volunteers, several from America where an article about the house was published.

That article in an archaeological magazine, a picture story in a local paper and word-of-mouth have been responsible. Mrs Pritchard Gibson says, for 3,000 visitors so far (she lets them in even though it is not open to the public), and 5,000 letters, all of them answered.

Some contributions have been sent to the trust, including £1,000 from Marks & Spencer and £4,000 from the Prince of Wales Trust. Anything else is welcome, because they would like £35,000 to set up a permanent archaeological centre in the old gatehouse.

As for the Pritchard Gibsons, they have put everything into discovering the secrets of their home. "We've sold shares, ploughed in our savings, we have no holidays away, I never go to the hairdresser. I have no jewellery and my daughters dress in hand-me-downs," she says. "That doesn't matter; we have more than a house and a home here. It is an adventure. It is living history."

Heap of the week: Orchardleigh, Somerset

Golf dream hits rough

Until four years ago Orchardleigh, a château-like house in a large park near Frome in Somerset, was a Victorian time capsule. Then the property was sold, for more than £3.5 million, and soon afterwards Baron Hotels and Leisure was granted a cornucopia of planning permissions, not only for use of the house as a hotel but for a second 150-bedroom hotel, two championship golf courses and a clubhouse.

The development companies went into liquidation in 1990, with the courses half completed and the contractors, Transconti-



In search of a future: Orchardleigh is up for sale at £8 million

nen, in debt, owed a lot of money. The house and the 420 acres are now for sale at £6 million. However, Mendip district council planning committee is taking a stronger line, requiring repairs to empty lodges and cottages and other handsome estate buildings

for a 150-bedroom hotel for about 40 houses or, in the absence of a buyer, forming a joint venture with a developer willing to put in finance, and sharing the eventual proceeds.

Anyone wishing to proceed with the golf courses, Mr Grimes says, will need £200,000 to complete the park course and £500,000-£750,000 for the lake course.

Orchardleigh was built in 1855-58 by the architect Thomas Henry Wyatt in an Elizabethan style with a romantic silhouette. It is now a painful cautionary tale. Had those planning permissions not been granted, the house would almost certainly have been sold at a reasonable price to a sympathetic new owner.

MARCUS BINNEY

● For more details call Mark Grimes at Savills, Bath (0225 444622).

Life in green peace



Buyer's France

DEUX-SEVRES

and willow trees — a national park known as *La Venise Poitevine*. Since there are few roads the Marais, and most of the fields are surrounded by water, the farmers, and the cattle too, travel in flat-bottomed punts.

The north of the region is largely flat and dull to look at; the south is undulating and green; not as pretty as parts of the Dordogne, but it attracts far fewer tourists.

Property prices are much cheaper, too. There are plenty of unconverted stone cottages and barns for less than FFr200,000 (due to fluctuations in the exchange rate we are quoting prices in francs temporarily). A cottage in reasonable

condition, with two or three bedrooms and half an acre of garden, will cost FFr250,000.

Old stone farmhouses, with outbuildings and potential for conversion into gites, needing complete or partial restoration, cost from FFr300,000. Converted and restored, they fetch FFr290,000 or offers.

In the great and pleasant countryside of the southern Deux-Sèvres, in southwest France, the attractive stone-built house shown below left is for sale at FFr660,000 (including agency fees).

The property, not far from the pretty town of Melle with its three Romanesque churches, has been

CHERYL TAYLOR

Arresting the franc

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enough time to transfer money for the purchase knowing exactly what the cost will be.

● Of course, this situation could backfire on you. If you fix the exchange rate and there is a drop in the value of the franc against the pound within the next two months, you could end up paying more for your French home.

● French financial consultants Cottet and Templeton Associates produce a useful leaflet on French currency, banking and mortgages (Chapel Pfaifer, near Coton, Wilts, SN14 9HZ, 0725 810530).

restored and modernised, with a new roof and central heating. It has two large reception rooms, with exposed stone walls, beamed ceilings and open fireplaces, a modernised, fitted kitchen, two bathrooms and four bedrooms.

Also available in the Deux-Sèvres is a little village house for renovation set in two acres of garden, with good views over open countryside. It has a living-room, kitchen and two bedrooms. There is an attached open-fronted barn with a summer kitchen/barbecue area, as well as various outbuildings — but no sanitation. The owner is asking FFr250,000 or offers.

The UK agent is The French Property Shop, Wadhurst Road, Mark Cross, East Sussex TN6 3PB (0892 852449). Another UK agent with associates in the Deux-Sèvres is La Collection Française, 66 High Street, Malmesbury, Wiltshire, SN16 9JZ (01672 516266).

CHERYL TAYLOR

Visions of Mackintosh



Seeing things: astrologer Majorie Orr visualised a Scottish theme; designer Gerald Moran made it work

When Majorie Orr, an astrologer, and her husband, Will Hopper, a merchant banker, bought their home in Hampstead, north London, four years ago they had different visions of how to improve the three-storey terrace house, built in 1760 and used as a brothel when Hopper was a spa.

Mr Hopper was all for ripping out the inside of the Grade II listed house and starting again. All his wife knew was that she liked lots of plants and bright colours.

"We started with a pile of rubble," she says, "after Will had taken out the staircase and the whole of the first floor. But we both had the notion that the house should have a theme."

The theme emerged by accident. Ms Orr and her husband come from Glasgow and she admires the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, the Glaswegian turn-of-the-century architect and designer. As she was passing the Hampstead shop of Gerald Moran, an interior designer, she saw what looked like a Mackintosh sofa in his window.

"We fell into Gerald," she says. "He loves redesigning spaces, and was quick to take up our ideas. I love the clean lines and freshness of Mackintosh, and the advantage is that it can be quite classical and formal, but you can also get away with floral bits."

Mr Moran's forte is in uniting classic modern furniture with decorative antiques. He has worked on houses for John Le Carré and

projects in other countries. "What we have done here," he says, "is to preserve the past in recreating some of Mackintosh's designs in a 1990s setting, while at the same time looking to the future."

To do this, the narrow hallway was demolished, opening up the front room into a larger space as

Mr Moran supplied two Italian sofas for the sitting room — copies of 1974 originals by Afra and Tobia Scarpa, now in the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The only disagreement was over the floor-to-ceiling fireplace with two deep recesses, for which Mr Moran wanted to use white Venetian marble. "I don't like marble," Ms Orr says. "It reminds me of nasty hotel bathrooms. But it has worked here and is superb."

Although the house has been meticulously designed there is no sense that things have to be in their place. "You have to leave a space for people to express their own personality," Mr Moran says.

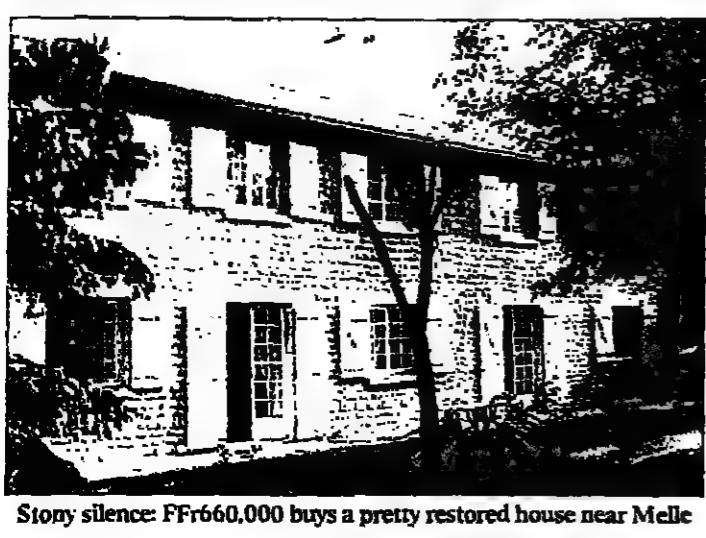
Mr Hopper's penchant is for high-tech, and the design incorporates his wish for underfloor heating, closed circuit television cameras to monitor the front door and piped music from the ceiling.

There are many deft touches. The carpet changes to terracotta for the first floor and reverts to cornflower blue for the top floor, but sets of squares woven in the contrasting colour on the landings preserve the sense of unity. The conservatory at the back of the house opens on to a tiny walled Japanese garden.

Despite her initial ambivalence, Ms Orr has ended up with a house full of design and architectural details that are linked into her past. A little bit of *apres* Mackintosh.

KAY MARLES

● Gerald Moran Interiors, 85 Heath Street, London NW3 (071-435 4093)



Stony silence: FFr660,000 buys a pretty restored house near Melle

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BBC1

6.45 Open University
8.50 Playdays (r) (873927) 9.10 News and weather (3295756)
9.15 Morning Worship from the Church of St Michael and All Angels, Edenham, Lincolnshire (s) (8795756)
10.00 See Hear! The first of a new series of the magazine for the hearing impaired includes a report from the British Deaf Association Congress (s) (1669)
10.30 Inside English. A new eight-part series on how to organise language skills (716992) 10.45 *English How to Learn a Language*. A four-part series (r) (7164447)
11.00 *Careering Ahead*. The first of a weekly magazine looking at new skills, opportunities and ideas in the world of career training (6621)
11.30 *Winning*. David Hall presents a new series on the secret of small business success (9350)
12.00 *Spain on a Plate*. María José Sevilla's five-part gastronomic journey through Spain begins in the Basque country (r). (Ceefax) (25756) 12.30 *Country File*. Rural issues examined by John Craven (980718) 12.55 *Weather* (1368422)
1.00 *News* (6654166) followed by *On the Record*. A new series begins with a look at the Labour party's efforts to become an effective opposition under John Smith (6643282)
2.00 *EastEnders*. *Omnibus* edition (r). (Ceefax) (s) (72398) 3.00 *Eldorado* (r). (Ceefax) (s) (9008)
3.30 *Film: The Hallelujah Trail* (1965) starring Burt Lancaster and Lee Remick. Protracted comedy western about the efforts of the town of Remick to stock up with whisky for the winter despite the attentions of thirsty Indians and a posse of temperance women. Directed by John Sturges (7733640)
5.50 *Steven Spielberg's Amazing Stories: Gather Ye Acorns* starring Mark Hamill and David Rapaport. A young man takes a walk in the woods in order to become wealthy. (Ceefax) (s) (468793)
6.15 *The Survival Guide to Food*. Chris Bavin looks at ways of killing food poisoning germs. (Ceefax) (s) (594756)
6.25 *News* with Chris Lowe. (Ceefax) *Weather* (671244)
6.40 *Songs of Praise*. A celebration of harvest festival from Down Cathedral, Downpatrick. (Ceefax) (s) (855195)
7.15 *Keeping Up Appearances*. Patricia Routledge stars as the indomitable snob Hyacinth, this week making expensive holiday enquiries before attending to her voluntary church-cleaning duties. (Ceefax) (s) (488386)
7.45 *The House of Elliot*. Polished period drama following the fortunes of two sisters who run a fashion house. Starring Stella Gonet and Louise Lombard. (Ceefax) (s) (625176)
8.40 *Birds of a Feather*. The results are unexpected when Sharon joins a dating agency and Tracy tries her hand at matchmaking. Starring Pauline Quirk and Linda Robson. (Ceefax) (s) (713534)
9.10 *News* with Michael Buerk. (Ceefax) *Weather* (796261)



Police corruption: Christopher John Hall, centre (9.25pm)

9.25 *Screen One: Black and Blue*. G.F. Newman is no admirer of the police and his television dramas, from the infamous *Law and Order* onwards, have invariably presented the force as violent and corrupt. In *Black and Blue* it is both of these things and racist as well. The setting is a poor London housing estate, populated mainly by blacks and notorious for drug dealing. When a councillor investigating race prejudice in the police is murdered, a black officer (Christopher John Hall) is brought in to work undercover to find the killer. In doing so he discovers that the local constabulary is knee-deep in corruption. *Black and Blue* is a rough, violent and disenchanted piece which despite its upright black hero will win few friends in the police and leave the public at large wondering if it concerns the black in Britain is really as rotten and nasty as this. (Ceefax) (s) (2565756)
10.50 *Everyone's Seen No Evil* — The Sawa and Smita Massacre. An exploration of the legacy of the massacre carried out in Beirut during the civil war by Christian Lebanese militiamen under the eye of the Israeli army. (Ceefax) (s) (195593)
11.45 *Black and White in Colour*. The first of two programmes charting black and Asian contributions to British television (r). (Ceefax) (948992) 12.35am *Weather* (2613080)

BBC2

6.35 Open University (38851260)
12.00 *Sunday Grandstand* presented by Steve Rider. The line-up is (subject to alteration): 12.05 Yachting: races in the Ultra 30 Series competition; 12.15 Athletics: highlights of last night's events in the IAAF world cup in Bologna including the men's 4x100m relay, the men's 400m and 1,500m; 1.25 Touring Cars: round 11 of the Esso British championship from Donington; 1.45 Motor Racing: live coverage of the Portuguese grand prix from Estoril; 3.45 Golf: the final round of the Westlinks women's British open from Woburn. (12.00-3.45 44289465, 3.45-5.50 53897485)
5.50 *One Man and His Dog*. Phil Drabble introduces two boys and two girls competing with their dogs for the Young Handlers championship (s) (521331)
6.35 *The Money Programme: Depth of Recession*. A new series begins with Peter Jay taking a look at the crisis in the economy (562602)
7.15 *The Living Planet: The Sky Above*. David Attenborough shows how certain animals have overcome the effects of gravity and seen from space the destructive force of a tornado-producing thunderstorm (r). (Ceefax) (808468)
8.10 *The Look: Scouting Money*. The series on the fashion industry continues with an examination of how marketing techniques can mean success or failure for a designer (353973)
9.00 *Building Insights*. In the first of a new series the composer Iannis Xenakis returns to Sainte Marie de la Tourette for the first time since its completion in 1960. This Dominican monastery near Lyon was masterminded by the architect Le Corbusier but Xenakis was responsible for much of its design (252981)
9.10 *Did You See...?* presented by Jeremy Paxman. This week's guests, Caroline Waldegrave, Austin Mitchell and Dr Sheila Cassidy, comment on Granada's Hostages and the BBC's *The Cecil Parkinson Story* and *Floyd on Spain* (s) (563992)



Historical: Sweeney, McGrath, Lederer and Wells (9.40pm)

9.40 *A Word in Your Ear*.

● CHOICE: *Rory McGrath* chairs a new show in which three comedy performers dress up as historical characters. This week's trio are Jim Sweeney, as Resputin, Helen Lederer as Enid Blyton and John Wells as Queen Victoria. In these guises they are invited to do stand-up routines, make jokes at old film clips, answer questions from the audience and have their reputations measured by a "fameometer". It is an idea that starts better than it finishes. Lederer does her best to show Blyton as a giggling upper-class schoolgirl. Wells plays Victoria as a pantomime dame with a cigar and German accent and Sweeney is the nearest of the three to a lookalike. Some of the lines are funny but the game show format is too constraining to allow much wit to flow (992640)
10.10 *Grand Prix: Highlights of today's Portuguese grand prix in Estoril* (877485)
10.45 *World Cup Athletics*. Live coverage from Havana of the final day's events in IAAF world cup. The commentators are Stuart Storey, David Coleman, Paul Dickenson and Brendan Foster (s) (48824665)
12.30 *The Night Stalker: The Knightly Murders*. Supernatural drama series starring Darren McGavin. This week Kolchak investigates a series of murders apparently connected with a suit of armour once worn by the Black Knight (5031770). Ends at 1.25

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SATELLITE
SKY ONE
● Via the Astra and Marcopolo satellites 8.00 *Conversation With... (46814)* 10.30 *David Frost in Conversation With... (63331)* 11.30 *Travel Destinations (56053)* 12.30pm *Financial Times Business Weekly (74447)* 1.30 *Target (75175)* 2.30 *Roaring Report (14765)* 2.30pm *Cheaper Squad (80195)* 2.45 *Trapper John (14398)* 2.45 *Eight's Enough (99379)* 4.30 *Hotel (70794)* 5.45 *News Report (39718)* 11.30 *ABC News (60549)* 12.00 *ABC News (60549)* 12.30 *ABC News (60549)* 1.30 *ABC News (60549)* 2.00 *Those Were the Days (57812)* 5.30-6.00 *ABC News (57859)*
SKY MOVIES+
● Via the Astra and Marcopolo satellites 6.00 *6000 Miles to Go (83731)* 7.00 *Death of a Tennis Star (play) (93330)* 10.00 *Brenda Starr (1950): Come-Book adventure* starring Brooke Shields (96755)
SKY NEWS
● Via the Astra and Marcopolo satellites 6.00am *News on the hour*. 6.00am *Sunrise (9876669)* 9.30 *David Frost*

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BBC1

7.25 News and weather (2074828)
7.30 Quick Draw McGraw (r) (9315084) **7.35 Spider**, Musical animation (r) (s) (9314355) **7.40 Animal World** looks at the beaver, Canada's national animal (s) (9395220) **7.50 Lite! Bits** Cartoon set in an enchanted forest (5934220) **8.15 Chucklevision**. The brothers find country life is not as simple as it seems (s) (6755668) **8.35 Buckley O'Hare**, Adventures of the intergalactic superhero (r) (8302404)
9.00 Going Live! Phillip Schofield and Sarah Greene return with new guest presenter Kristian Schmidt from *Neighbours*. **Jimmy Nail** and **Betty Boop** are among the guests (34010268) **12.12 Weather** (7766572)
12.15 Grandstand presented by Steve Rider. The line-up is (subject to alteration): **12.20 Football**: Ray Stubbs and Gary Lineker look back at the week's action in the Premier League and preview today's games and next week's second leg competitions in the European club competitions; **1.00 News**; **1.05, 1.35** Athletics: highlights of yesterday's action in the IAAF world cup; **1.25, 1.55, 2.45, 3.20, 3.55** Racing from Ascot; **3.00, 3.35, 4.05** Golf; the third round of the Wethabix women's British open; **4.40 Final Score** (6527817) **5.05** News and weather (3300171) **5.15 Regional news** and weather (2773688)
5.20 Dad's Army, Arthur Lowe, John Le Mesurier and Clive Dunn star in the priceless *Home Guard* comedy by Jimmy Perry and David Croft. To raise morale Captain Mainwaring decides to hold a dance (r). (Ceefax) (3054268)
5.50 Big Break, Jim Davidson hosts the game show in which pro snooker help contestants. (Ceefax) (s) (6467473)
6.20 Bobby Davro — **Public Enemy No. 1**, Hidden cameras have captured members of the public doing embarrassing things. Bobby races along London's Embankment wearing only his boxer shorts. His guests, Bruno Brookes, Windsor Davies, Russell Grant and Kristian Schmidt, are embarrassed themselves. (Ceefax) (s) (6291333)
7.00 Bonfire's German Game, Family couples try to remember contents of the conveyor belt. (Ceefax) (s) (6201)
8.00 Casualty, A crocheted attack means emergency work for the hard-pressed medics of Holby Hospital. (Ceefax) (s) (6482449)
8.50 News with Martyn Lewis. (Ceefax) Sport and weather (766201)



Baseball fan: Susan Sarandon with Kevin Costner (9.10pm)

9.10 Film: Bull Durham (1988)
● Via the Astra and Marescopio satellites **9.10** **10.00** **11.30** **12.30** **13.30** **14.30** **15.30** **16.30** **17.30** **18.30** **19.30** **20.30** **21.30** **22.30** **23.30** **24.30** **25.30** **26.30** **27.30** **28.30** **29.30** **30.30** **31.30** **32.30** **33.30** **34.30** **35.30** **36.30** **37.30** **38.30** **39.30** **40.30** **41.30** **42.30** **43.30** **44.30** **45.30** **46.30** **47.30** **48.30** **49.30** **50.30** **51.30** **52.30** **53.30** **54.30** **55.30** **56.30** **57.30** **58.30** **59.30** **60.30** **61.30** **62.30** **63.30** **64.30** **65.30** **66.30** **67.30** **68.30** **69.30** **70.30** **71.30** **72.30** **73.30** **74.30** **75.30** **76.30** **77.30** **78.30** **79.30** **80.30** **81.30** **82.30** **83.30** **84.30** **85.30** **86.30** **87.30** **88.30** **89.30** **90.30** **91.30** **92.30** **93.30** **94.30** **95.30** **96.30** **97.30** **98.30** **99.30** **100.30** **101.30** **102.30** **103.30** 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